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UNDERWOODS  
MEMORIES AND PORTRAITS  
THE BLACK ARROW  
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FATHER DAMIEN: AN OPEN LETTER  
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A FOOTNOTE TO HISTORY  
CATRIONA  
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LETTERS TO HIS FAMILY AND FRIENDS  
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SONGS OF TRAVEL  
ST. IVES  
IN THE SOUTH SEAS  
ESSAYS OF TRAVEL  
TALES AND FANTASIES  
THE ART OF WRITING  
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A CHRISTMAS SERMON  
TALK AND TALKERS  
ON THE CHOICE OF A PROFESSION  
NEW POEMS  
MORAL EMBLEMS

**With Mrs. Stevenson**

**THE DYNAMITER**

**With Lloyd Osbourne**

**THE WRONG BOX**

**THE WRECKER**

**THE EBB-TIDE**





# STEVENSON'S POEMS



# POEMS

BY

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

INCLUDING

UNDERWOODS, BALLADS  
SONGS OF TRAVEL

LONDON

CHATTO & WINDUS

1922





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**UNDERWOODS**



*Of all my verse, like not a single line;  
But like my title, for it is not mine.  
That title from a better man I stole :  
Ah, how much better, had I stol'n the whole !*

## DEDICATION

THERE are men and classes of men that stand above the common herd: the soldier, the sailor and the shepherd not unfrequently; the artist rarely; rarelier still, the clergyman; the physician almost as a rule. He is the flower (such as it is) of our civilization; and when that stage of man is done with, and only remembered to be marvelled at in history, he will be thought to have shared as little as any in the defects of the period, and most notably exhibited the virtues of the race. Generosity he has, such as is possible to those who practise an art, never to those who drive a trade; discretion, tested by a hundred secrets; tact, tried in a thousand embarrassments; and what are more important, Heracleean cheerfulness and courage. So it is that he brings air and cheer into the sickroom, and often enough, though not so often as he wishes, brings healing.

Gratitude is but a lame sentiment; thanks, when they are expressed, are often more embarrassing than welcome; and yet I must set forth mine to a few out of many doctors who have brought me comfort and help: to Dr. Willey of San Francisco, whose kind-

ness to a stranger it must be as grateful to him, as it is touching to me, to remember; to Dr. Karl Ruedi of Davos, the good genius of the English in his frosty mountains; to Dr. Herbert of Paris, whom I knew only for a week, and to Dr. Caisso of Montpellier, whom I knew only for ten days, and who have yet written their names deeply in my memory; to Dr. Brandt of Royat; to Dr. Wakefield of Nice; to Dr. Chepmell, whose visits make it a pleasure to be ill; to Dr. Horace Dobell, so wise in counsel; to Sir Andrew Clark, so unwearied in kindness; and to that wise youth, my uncle, Dr. Balfour.

I forget as many as I remember; and I ask both to pardon me, these for silence, those for inadequate speech. But one name I have kept on purpose to the last, because it is a household word with me, and because if I had not received favours from so many hands and in so many quarters of the world, it should have stood upon this page alone: that of my friend Thomas Bodley Scott of Bournemouth. Will he accept this, although shared among so many, for a dedication to himself? and when next my ill-fortune (which has thus its pleasant side) brings him hurrying to me when he would fain sit down to meat or lie down to rest, will he care to remember that he takes this trouble for one who is not fool enough to be ungrateful?

R. L. S.

SKERRYVORE,  
BOURNEMOUTH.

## NOTE

THE human conscience has fled of late the troublesome domain of conduct for what I should have supposed to be the less congenial field of art: there she may now be said to rage, and with special severity in all that touches dialect; so that in every novel the letters of the alphabet are tortured, and the reader wearied, to commemorate shades of mispronunciation. Now, spelling is an art of great difficulty in my eyes, and I am inclined to lean upon the printer, even in common practice, rather than to venture abroad upon new quests. And the Scots tongue has an orthography of its own, lacking neither "authority nor author." Yet the temptation is great to lend a little guidance to the bewildered Englishman. Some simple phonetic artifice might defend your verses from barbarous mishandling, and yet not injure any vested interest. So it seems at first; but there are rocks ahead. Thus, if I wish the diphthong *ou* to have its proper value, I may write *oor* instead of *our*; many have done so and live, and the pillars of the universe remained unshaken. But if I did so, and came presently to *down*, which is the classical Scots spelling

of the English *down*, I should begin to feel uneasy ; and if I went on a little farther, and came to a classical Scots word, like *stour* or *dour* or *clour*, I should know precisely where I was—that is to say, that I was out of sight of land on those high seas of spelling reform in which so many strong swimmers have toiled vainly. To some the situation is exhilarating ; as for me, I give one bubbling cry and sink. The compromise at which I have arrived is indefensible, and I have no thought of trying to defend it. As I have stuck for the most part to the proper spelling, I append a table of some common vowel sounds which no one need consult ; and just to prove that I belong to my age and have in me the stuff of a reformer, I have used modification marks throughout. Thus I can tell myself, not without pride, that I have added a fresh stumbling-block for English readers, and to a page of print in my native tongue, have lent a new uncouthness. *Sed non nobis.*

I note again, that among our new dialecticians, the local habitat of every dialect is given to the square mile. I could not emulate this nicety if I desired ; for I simply wrote my Scots as well as I was able, not caring if it hailed from Lauderdale or Angus, from the Mearns or Galloway ; if I had ever heard a good word, I used it without shame ; and when Scots was lacking, or the rhyme jibbed, I was glad (like my betters) to fall back on English. For all that, I own to a friendly feeling for the tongue of Fergusson and of Sir Walter,

both Edinburgh-men; and I confess that Burns has always sounded in my ear like something partly foreign. And indeed I am from the Lothians myself; it is there I heard the language spoken about my childhood; and it is in the drawling Lothian voice that I repeat it to myself. Let the precisians call my speech that of the Lothians. And if it be not pure, alas! what matters it? The day draws near when this illustrious and malleable tongue shall be quite forgotten; and Burns's Ayrshire, and Dr. MacDonald's Aberdeen-awa', and Scott's brave, metropolitan utterance will be all equally the ghosts of speech. Till then I would love to have my hour as a native Maker, and be read by my own countryfolk in our own dying language: an ambition surely rather of the heart than of the head, so restricted as it is in prospect of endurance, so parochial in bounds of space.



## **BOOK I.—IN ENGLISH**





## I

## ENVOY

Go, little book, and wish to all  
 Flowers in the garden, meat in the hall,  
 A bin of wine, a spice of wit,  
 A house with lawns enclosing it,  
 A living river by the door,  
 A nightingale in the sycamore !

## II

## A SONG OF THE ROAD

THE gauger walked with willing foot,  
 And aye the gauger played the flute ;  
 And what should Master Gauger play  
 But *Over the hills and far away ?*

Whene'er I buckle on my pack  
 And foot it gaily in the track,  
 O pleasant gauger, long since dead,  
 I hear you fluting on ahead.

You go with me the self-same way—  
 The self-same air for me you play ;  
 For I do think and so do you,  
 It is the tune to travel to.

For who would gravely set his face  
To go to this or t'other place ?  
There's nothing under Heav'n so blue  
That's fairly worth the travelling to.

On every hand the roads begin,  
And people walk with zeal therein ;  
But whereso'er the highways tend,  
Be sure there's nothing at the end.

'Then follow you, wherever he  
The travelling mountains of the sky.  
Or let the streams in civil mode  
Direct your choice upon a road ;

For one and all, or high or low,  
Will lead you where you wish to go ;  
And one and all go night and day  
*Over the hills and far away !*

*Forest of Montargis, 1878.*

### III

#### THE CANOE SPEAKS

ON the great streams the ships may go  
About men's business to and fro.  
But I, the egg-shell pinnace, sleep  
On crystal waters ankle-deep :  
I, whose diminutive design,  
Of sweeter cedar, pithier pine,

Is fashioned on so frail a mould,  
A hand may launch, a hand withhold :  
I, rather, with the leaping trout  
Wind, among lilies, in and out ;  
I, the unmanned, inviolate,  
Green, rustic rivers, navigate ;  
My dipping paddle scarcely shakes  
The berry in the bramble-brakes ;  
Still forth on my green way I wend  
Beside the cottage garden-end ;  
And by the nested angler fare,  
And take the lovers unaware.  
By willow wood and water-wheel  
Speedily fleets my touching keel ;  
By all retired and shady spots  
Where prosper dim forget-me-nots ;  
By meadows where at afternoon  
The growing maidens troop in June  
To loose their girdles on the grass.  
Ah ! speedier than before the glass  
The backward toilet goes ; and swift  
As swallows quiver, robe and shift  
And the rough country stockings lie  
Around each young divinity.  
When, following the recondite brook,  
Sudden upon this scene I look,  
And light with unfamiliar face  
On chaste Diana's bathing-place,  
Loud ring the hills about and all  
The shallows are abandoned. . . .

## STEVENSON'S POEMS

### IV

It is the season now to go  
About the country high and low,  
Among the lilacs hand in hand,  
And two by two in fairy land.

The brooding boy, the sighing maid,  
Wholly fain and half afraid,  
Now meet along the hazel'd brook  
To pass and linger, pause and look.

A year ago, and blithely paired,  
Their rough-and-tumble play they shared ;  
They kissed and quarrelled, laughed and cried,  
A year ago at Eastertide.

With bursting heart, with fiery face,  
She strove against him in the race ;  
He unabashed her garter saw,  
That now would touch her skirts with awe.

Now by the stile ablaze she stops,  
And his demurer eyes he drops ;  
Now they exchange averted sighs  
Or stand and marry silent eyes.

And he to her a hero is  
And sweeter she than primroses ;  
Their common silence dearer far  
Than nightingale and mavis are.

Now when they sever wedded hands,  
Joy trembles in their bosom-strands  
And lovely laughter leaps and falls  
Upon their lips in madrigals.

## V

## THE HOUSE BEAUTIFUL

*A NAKED house, a naked moor,  
A shivering pool before the door,  
A garden bare of flowers and fruit  
And poplars at the garden foot :  
Such is the place that I live in,  
Bleak without and bare within.*

Yet shall your ragged moor receive  
The incomparable pomp of eve,  
And the cold glories of the dawn  
Behind your shivering trees be drawn ;  
And when the wind from place to place  
Doth the unmoored cloud-galleons chase,  
Your garden gloom and gleam again,  
With leaping sun, with glancing rain.  
Here shall the wizard moon ascend  
The heavens, in the crimson end  
Of day's declining splendour ; here  
The army of the stars appear.  
The neighbour hollows dry or wet,  
Spring shall with tender flowers beset ;  
And oft the morning muser see  
Larks rising from the broomy lea,  
And every fairy wheel and thread  
Of cobweb dew-bediamonded.  
When daisies go, shall winter time  
Silver the simple grass with rime ;  
Autumnal frosts enchant the pool  
And make the cart-ruts beautiful ;

And when snow-bright the moor expands,  
How shall your children clap their hands !  
To make this earth our hermitage,  
A cheerful and a changeful page,  
God's bright and intricate device  
Of days and seasons doth suffice.

## VI

## A VISIT FROM THE SEA

FAR from the loud sea beaches  
Where he goes fishing and crying,  
Here in the inland garden  
Why is the sea-gull flying ?

Here are no fish to dive for ;  
Here is the corn and lea ;  
Here are the green trees rustling.  
Hie away home to sea !

Fresh is the river water'  
And quiet among the rushes ;  
This is no home for the sea-gull  
But for the rooks and thrushes.

Pity the bird that has wandered !  
Pity the sailor ashore !  
Hurry him home to the ocean,  
Let him come here no more !

High on the sea-cliff ledges  
The white gulls are trooping and crying,  
Here among rooks and roses,  
Why is the sea-gull flying ?

## VII

## TO A GARDENER

FRIEND, in my mountain-side demesne  
My plain-beholding, rosy, green  
And linnet-haunted garden-ground,  
Let still the esculents abound.  
Let first the onion flourish there,  
Rose among roots, the maiden-fair,  
Wine-scented and poetic soul  
Of the capacious salad bowl.  
Let thyme the mountaineer (to dress  
The tinier birds) and wading cress,  
The lover of the shallow brook,  
From all my plots and borders look.

Nor crisp and ruddy radish, nor  
Pease-cods for the child's pinafore  
Be lacking; nor of salad clan  
The last and least that ever ran  
About great nature's garden-beds.  
Nor thence be missed the speary heads  
Of artichoke; nor thence the bean  
That gathered innocent and green  
Outsavours the belauded pea.

These tend, I prithee; and for me,  
Thy most long-suffering master, bring  
In April, when the linnets sing  
And the days lengthen more and more  
• At sundown to the garden door.



And I, being provided thus,  
 Shall, with superb asparagus,  
 A book, a taper, and a cup  
 Of country wine, divinely sup.

*La Solitude, Hyères.*

## VIII

## TO MINNIE

(With a hand - glass)

A PICTURE-FRAME for you to fill,  
 A paltry setting for your face,  
 A thing that has no worth until  
 You lend it something of your grace  
 I send (unhappy I that sing  
 Laid by awhile upon the shelf)  
 Because I would not send a thing  
 Less charming than you are yourself  
 And happier than I, alas !  
 (Dumb thing, I envy its delight)  
 'Twill wish you well, the looking-glass,  
 And look you in the face to-night.

1869.

## IX

## TO K. DE M.

A LOVER of the moorland bare  
 And honest country winds, you were ;  
 The silver-skimming rain you took ;  
 And loved the floodings of the brook,

Dew, frost and mountains, fire and seas,  
Tumultuary silences,  
Winds that in darkness fied a tune,  
And the high-riding, virgin moon.

And as the berry, pale and sharp,  
Springs on some ditch's counterscarp  
In our ungenial, native north—  
You put your frosted wildings forth,  
And on the heath, afar from man,  
A strong and bitter virgin ran.

The berry ripened keeps the rude  
And racy flavour of the wood.  
And you that loved the empty plain  
All redolent of wind and rain,  
Around you still the curlew sings—  
The freshness of the weather clings—  
The maiden jewels of the rain  
Sit in your dabbled locks again.

## X

## TO N. V. DE G. S.

THE unfathomable sea, and time, and tears,  
The deeds of heroes and the crimes of kings  
Dispart us ; and the river of events  
Has, for an age of years, to east and west  
More widely borne our cradles. Thou to me  
Art foreign, as when seamen at the dawn  
Descry a land far off and know not which.  
So I approach uncertain ; so I cruise  
Round thy mysterious islet, and behold

Surf and great mountains and loud river-bars,  
And from the shore hear inland voices call.  
Strange is the seaman's heart; he hopes, he fears:  
Draws closer and sweeps wider from that coast;  
Last, his rent sail refits, and to the deep  
His shattered prow uncomfited puts back.  
Yet as he goes he ponders at the helm  
Of that bright island; where he feared to touch,  
His spirit readventures; and for years,  
Where by his wife he slumbers safe at home,  
Thoughts of that land revisit him; he sees  
The eternal mountains beckon, and awakes  
Yearning for that far home that might have been

## XI

## TO WILL. H. LOW

YOUTH now flees on feathered foot,  
Faint and fainter sounds the flute,  
Rarer songs of gods; and still  
Somewhere on the sunny hill,  
Or along the winding stream,  
Through the willows, flits a dream;  
Flits but shows a smiling face,  
Flees but with so quaint a grace,  
None can choose to stay at home,  
All must follow, all must roam.

This is unborn beauty: she  
Now in air floats high and free,  
Takes the sun and breaks the blue;-  
Late with stooping pinion flew

TO WILL. H. LOW

21

Raking hedgerow trees, and wet  
Her wing in silver streams, and set  
Shining foot on temple roof :  
Now again she flies aloof,  
Coasting mountain clouds and kiss't  
By the evening's amethyst.

In wet wood and miry lane,  
Still we pant and pound in vain ;  
Still with leaden foot we chase  
Waning pinion, fainting face ;  
Still with gray hair we stumble on,  
Till, behold, the vision gone !  
Where hath fleeting beauty led ?  
To the doorway of the dead.  
Life is over, life was gay :  
We have come the primrose way.

XII

TO MRS. WILL. H. LOW

Even in the bluest noonday of July,  
There could not run the smallest breath of wind  
But all the quarter sounded like a wood ;  
And in the chequered silence and above  
The hum of city cabs that sought the Bois,  
Suburban ashes shivered into song.  
A patter and a chatter and a chirp  
And a long dying hiss—it was as though  
Starched old brocaded dames through all the house  
Had trailed a strident skirt, or the whole sky  
Even in a wink had over-brimmed in rain.

Hark, in these shady parlours, how it talks  
 Of the near Autumn, how the smitten ash  
 Trembles and augurs floods! O not too long  
 In these inconstant latitudes delay,  
 O not too late from the unbeloved north  
 Trim your escape! For soon shall this low roof  
 Resound indeed with rain, soon shall your eyes  
 Search the foul garden, search the darkened rooms,  
 Nor find one jewel but the blazing log.

12 Rue, Vernier, Paris.

## XIII

## TO H. F. BROWN

(Written during a dangerous sickness)

I sit and wait a pair of oars  
 On cis-Elysian river-shores.  
 Where the immortal dead have sate,  
 'Tis mine to sit and meditate;  
 To re-ascend life's rivulet,  
 Without remorse, without regret;  
 And sing my *Alma Genetrix*  
 Among the willows of the Styx.

And lo, as my serener soul  
 Did these unhappy shores patrol,  
 And wait with an attentive ear  
 The coming of the gondolier,  
 Your fire-surviving roll I took,  
 Your spirited and happy book;<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Life on the Lagoons*, by H. F. Brown, originally burned in the fire at Messrs. Kegan Paul, Trench and Co.'s.

Whereon, despite my frowning fate,  
It did my soul so recreate  
That all my fancies fled away  
On a Venetian holiday.

Now, thanks to your triumphant care,  
Your pages clear as April air,  
The sails, the bells, the birds, I know,  
And the far-off Friulan snow ;  
The land and sea, the sun and shade,  
And the blue even lamp-inlaid.  
For this, for these, for all, O friend,  
For your whole book from end to end—  
For Paron Piero's muttonham—  
I your defaulting debtor am.

Perchance, reviving, yet may I  
To your sea-paven city hie,  
And in a *felze*, some day yet  
Light at your pipe my cigarette.

## XIV

## TO ANDREW LANG

DEAR Andrew, with the brindled hair,  
Who glory to have thrown in air,  
High over arm, the trembling reed,  
By Ale and Kail, by Till and Tweed :  
An equal craft of hand you show  
The pen to guide, the fly to throw :  
I count you happy starred ; for God,  
When he with inkpot and with rod

Endowed you, bade your fortune lead  
 Forever by the crooks of Tweed,  
 Forever by the woods of song  
 And lands that to the Muse belong ;  
 Or if in peopled streets, or in  
 The abhorred pedantic sanhedrim,  
 It should be yours to wander, still  
 Airs of the morn, airs of the hill,  
 The plovery Forest and the seas  
 That break about the Hebrides,  
 Should follow over field and plain  
 And find you at the window pane ;  
 And you again see hill and peel,  
 And the bright springs gush at your heel.  
 So went the fiat forth, and so  
 Garrulous like a brook you go,  
 With sound of happy mirth and sheen  
 Of daylight—whether by the green  
 You fare that moment, or the gray ;  
 Whether you dwell in March or May ;  
 Or whether treat of reels and rods  
 Or of the old unhappy gods :  
 Still like a brook your page has shone,  
 And your ink sings of Helicon.

## XV

## ET TU IN ARCADIA VIXISTI

(TO R. A. M. S.)

IN ancient tales, O friend, thy spirit dwelt ;  
 There, from of old, thy childhood passed ; and there  
 High expectation, high delights and deeds,  
 Thy fluttering heart with hope and terror moved.

And thou hast heard of yore the Blatant Beast,  
And Roland's horn, and that wār-scattering shout  
Of all-unarmed Achilles, ægis-crowned.  
And perilous lands thou sawest, sounding shores  
And seas and forests drear, island and dale  
And mountain dark. For thou with Tristram rod'st  
Or Bedevere, in farthest Lyonesse.

Thou hadst a booth in Samarcand, whereat  
Side-looking Magians trafficked; thence, by night,  
An Afreet snatched thee, and with wings upbore  
Beyond the Aral mount; or, hoping gain,  
Thou, with a jar of money, didst embark,  
For Balsorah, by sea. But chiefly thou  
In that clear air took'st life; in Arcady  
The haunted, land of song; and by the wells  
Where most the gods frequent. There Chiron old,  
In the Pelethronian antre, taught thee lore:  
The plants, he taught, and by the shining stars  
In forests dim to steer. There hast thou seen  
Immortal Pæn dance, secret in a glade,  
And, dancing, roll his eyes; these, where they fell,  
Shed glee, and through the congregated oaks  
A flying horror winged; while all the earth  
To the god's pregnant footing thrilled within.  
Or whiles, beside the sobbing stream, he breathed,  
In his clutched pipe unformed and wizard strains  
Divine yet brutal; which the forest heard,  
And thou, with awe; and far upon the plain  
The unthinking ploughman started and gave ear.

Now things there are that, upon him who sees,  
A strong vocation lay; and strains there are  
That whoso hears shall hear for evermore.



For evermore thou hear'st immortal Pan  
And those melodious godheads, ever young  
And ever quiring, on the mountains old.

What was this earth, child of the gods, to thee ?  
Forth from thy dreamland thou, a dreamer, cam'st  
And in thine ears the olden music rang,  
And in thy mind the doings of the dead,  
And those heroic ages long forgot.  
To a so fallen earth, alas ! too late,  
Alas ! in evil days, thy steps return,  
To list at noon for nightingales, to grow  
A dweller on the beach till Argo come  
That came long since, a lingerer by the pool  
Where that desired angel bathes no more.

As when the Indian to Dakota comes,  
Or farthest Idaho, and where he dwelt,  
He with his clan, a humming city finds ;  
Thereon awhile, amazed, he stares, and then  
To right and leftward, like a questing dog,  
Seeks first the ancestral altars, then the hearth  
Long cold with rains, and where old terror lodged,  
And where the dead. So thee undying Hope,  
With all her pack, hunts screaming through the years.  
Here, there, thou flee'st ; but nor here nor there  
The pleasant gods abide, the glory dwells.

That, that was not Apollo, not the god.  
This was not Venus, though she Venus seemed  
A moment. And though fair yon river move,  
She, all the way, from disenchanted fount  
To seas unhallowed runs ; the gods forsook  
Long since her trembling rushes ; from her plains  
Disconsolate, long since adventure fled ;

And now although the inviting river flows,  
And every poplared cape, and every bend  
Or willowy islet, win upon thy soul  
And to thy hopeful shallop whisper speed ;  
Yet hope not thou at all ; hope is no more ;  
And O, long since the golden groves are dead  
The faery cities vanished from the land !

## XVI

## TO W. E. HENLEY

THE year runs through her phases ; rain and sun,  
Springtime and summer pass ; winter succeeds ;  
But one pale season rules the house of death.  
Cold falls the imprisoned daylight ; fell disease  
By each lean pallet squats, and pain and sleep  
Toss gaping on the pillows.

But O thou !

Uprise and take thy pipe. Bid music flow,  
Strains by good thoughts attended, like the spring  
The swallows follow over land and sea.  
Pain sleeps at once ; at once, with open eyes,  
Dozing despair awakes. The shepherd sees  
His flock come bleating home ; the seaman hears  
Once more the cordage rattle. Airs of home !  
Youth, love and roses blossom ; the gaunt ward  
Dislimns and disappears, and, opening out,  
Shows brooks and forests, and the blue beyond  
Of mountains.

Small the pipe ; but oh ! do thou,  
Peak-faced and suffering piper, blow therein

The dirge of heroes dead ; and to these sick,  
These dying, sound the triumph over death.  
Behold ! each greatly breathes ; each tastes a joy  
Unknown before, in dying ; for each knows  
A hero dies with him—though unfulfilled,  
Yet conquering truly—and not dies in vain.

So is pain cheered, death comforted ; the house  
Of sorrow smiles to listen. Once again—  
O thou, Orpheus and Heracles, the bard  
And the deliverer, touch the stops again !

## XVII

## HENRY JAMES

Who comes to-night ? We ope the doors in vain.  
Who comes ? My bursting walls, can you contain  
The presences that now together throng  
Your narrow entry, as with flowers and song,  
As with the air of life, the breath of talk ?  
Lo, how these fair immaculate women walk  
Behind their jocund maker ; and we see  
Slighted *De Mauves*, and that far different she,  
*Gressie*, the trivial sphynx ; and to our feast  
*Daisy* and *Barb* and *Chancellor* (she not least !)  
With all their silken, all their airy kin,  
Do like unbidden angels enter in.  
But he, attended by these shining names,  
Comes (best of all) himself—our welcome James.

## XVIII

## THE MIRROR SPEAKS

WHERE the bells peal far at sea  
Cunning fingers fashioned me.  
There on palace walls I hung  
While that Consuelo sung ;  
But I heard, though I listened well,  
Never a note, never a trill,  
Never a beat of the chiming bell.  
There I hung and looked, and there  
In my gray face, faces fair  
Shone from under shining hair.  
Well I saw the poisoning head,  
But the lips moved and nothing said ;  
And when lights were in the hall,  
Silent moved the dancers all.

So awhile I glowed, and then  
Fell on dusty days and men ;  
Long I slumbered packed in straw,  
Long I none but dealers saw ;  
Till before my silent eye  
One that sees came passing by.

Now with an outlandish grace,  
To the sparkling fire I face  
In the blue room at Skerryvore ;  
Where I wait until the door  
Open, and the Prince of Men,  
Henry James, shall come again.

## XIX

## KATHARINE

WE see you as we see a face  
That trembles in a forest place  
Upon the mirror of a pool  
Forever quiet, clear and cool ;  
And in the wayward glass, appears  
To hover between smiles and tears,  
Elfin and human, airy and true,  
And backed by the reflected blue.

## XX

## TO F. J. S.

I READ, dear friend, in your dear face  
Your life's tale told with perfect grace ;  
The river of your life, I trace  
Up the sun-chequered, devious bed  
To the far-distant fountain-head.

Not one quick beat of your warm heart,  
Nor thought that came to you apart,  
Pleasure nor pity, love nor pain  
Nor sorrow, has gone by in vain ;

But as some lone, wood-wandering child  
Brings home with him at evening mild  
The thorns and flowers of all the wild,  
From your whole life, O fair and true  
Your flowers and thorns you bring with you !

## REQUIEM

31

### XXI

## REQUIEM

UNDER the wide and starry sky,  
Dig the grave and let me lie.  
Glad did I live and gladly die,  
And I laid me down with a will.

This be the verse you grave for me :  
*Here he lies where he longed to be ;*  
*Home is the sailor, home from sea,*  
*And the hunter home from the hill.*

### XXII

## THE CELESTIAL SURGEON

IF I have faltered more or less  
In my great task of happiness ;  
If I have moved among my race  
And shown no glorious morning face ;  
If beams from happy human eyes  
Have moved me not ; if morning skies,  
Books, and my food, and summer rain  
Knocked on my sullen heart in vain :—  
Lord, thy most pointed pleasure take  
And stab my spirit broad awake ;  
Or, Lord, if too obdurate I,  
Choose thou, before that spirit die,  
A piercing pain, a killing sin,  
And to my dead heart run them in !

## XXIII

## OUR LADY OF THE SNOWS

Out of the sun, out of the blast,  
Out of the world, alone I passed  
Across the moor and through the wood  
To where the monastery stood.  
There neither lute nor breathing fife,  
Nor rumour of the world of life,  
Nor confidences low and dear,  
Shall strike the meditative ear.  
Aloof, unhelpful, and unkind,  
The prisoners of the iron mind,  
Where nothing speaks except the bell,  
The unfraternal brothers dwell.

Poor passionate men, still clothed afresh  
With agonising folds of flesh ;  
Whom the clear eyes solicit still  
To some bold output of the will,  
While fairy Fancy far before  
And musing Memory-Hold-the-door  
Now to heroic death invite  
And now uncurtain fresh delight :  
O, little boots it thus to dwell  
On the remote unneighbour'd hill !

O to be up and doing, O  
Unfearing and unshamed to go  
In all the uproar and the press  
About my human business !  
My undissuaded heart I hear  
Whisper courage in my ear.

With voiceless calls, the ancient earth  
Summons me to a daily birth.

Thou, O my love, ye, O my friends—  
The gist of life, the end of ends—  
To laugh, to love, to live, to die,  
Ye call me by the ear and eye!

Forth from the casement, on the plain  
Where honour has the world to gain,  
Pour forth and bravely do your part,  
O knights of the unshielded heart!  
Forth and forever forward!—out  
From prudent turret and redoubt,  
And in the mellay charge amain,  
To fall but yet to rise again!  
Captive? ah, still, to honour bright,  
A captive soldier of the right!  
Or free and fighting, good with ill?  
Unconquering but unconquered still!

And ye, O brethren, what if God,  
When from Heav'n's top he spies abroad,  
And sees on this tormented stage  
The noble war of mankind rage:  
What if his vivifying eye,  
O monks, should pass your corner by?  
For still the Lord is Lord of might;  
In deeds, in deeds, he takes delight;  
The plough, the spear, the laden barks,  
The field, the founded city, marks;  
He marks the smiler of the streets,  
The singer upon garden seats;  
He sees the climber in the rocks:  
To him, the shepherd folds his flocks.



For those he loves that underprop  
 With daily virtues Heaven's top,  
 And bear the falling sky with ease,  
 Unfrowning caryatides.

Those he approves that ply the trade,  
 That rock the child, that wed the maid,  
 That with weak virtues, weaker hands,  
 Sow gladness on the peopled lands,  
 And still with laughter, song and shout,  
 Spin the great wheel of earth about.

But ye?—O ye who linger still  
 Here in your fortress on the hill,  
 With placid face, with tranquil breath,  
 The unsought volunteers of death,  
 Our cheerful General on high  
 With careless looks may pass you by.

## XXIV

Not yet, my soul, these friendly fields desert,  
 Where thou with grass, and rivers, and the breeze,  
 And the bright face of day, thy dalliance hadst ;  
 Where to thine ear first sang the enraptured birds ;  
 Where love and thou that lasting bargain made.  
 The ship rides trimmed, and from the eternal shore  
 Thou hearest airy voices ; but not yet  
 Depart, my soul, not yet awhile depart.

Freedom is far, rest far. Thou art with life  
 Too closely woven, nerve with nerve intertwined ;  
 Service still craving service, love for love,  
 Love for dear love, still suppliant with tears.  
 Alas, not yet thy human task is done !

A bond at birth is forged ; a debt doth lie  
Immortal on mortality. It grows—  
By vast rebound it grows, unceasing growth ;  
Gift upon gift, alms upon alms, upreared,  
From man, from God, from nature, till the soul  
At that so huge indulgence stands amazed.

Leave not, my soul, the unfoughten field, nor leave  
Thy debts dishonoured, nor thy place desert  
Without due service rendered. For thy life,  
Up, spirit, and defend that fort of clay,  
Thy body, now beleaguered ; whether soon  
Or late she fall ; whether to-day thy friends  
Bewail thee dead, or, after years, a man  
Grown old in honour and the friend of peace.  
Contend, my soul, for moments and for hours ;  
Each is with service pregnant ; each reclaimed  
Is as a kingdom conquered, where to reign.

As when a captain rallies to the fight  
His scattered legions, and beats ruin back,  
He, on the field, encamps, well pleased in mind.  
Yet surely him shall fortune overtake,  
Him smite in turn, headlong his ensigns drive ;  
And that dear land, now safe, to-morrow fall.  
But he, unthinking, in the present good  
Solely delights, and all the camps rejoice.

## XXV

It is not yours, O mother, to complain,  
Not, mother, yours to weep,  
Though nevermore your son again  
Shall to your bosom creep,  
Though nevermore again you watch your baby sleep.

Though in the greener paths of earth,  
Mother and child, no more  
We wander ; and no more the birth  
Of me whom once you bore,  
Seems still the brave reward that once it seemed of yore ;

Though as all passes, day and night,  
The seasons and the years,  
From you, O mother, this delight,  
This also disappears—  
Some profit yet survives of all your pangs and tears.

The child, the seed, the grain of corn,  
The acorn on the hill,  
Each for some separate end is born  
In season fit, and still  
Each must in strength arise to work the almighty will.

So from the hearth the children flee,  
By that almighty hand  
Austerely led ; so one by sea  
Goes forth, and one by land ;  
Nor aught of all man's sons escapes from that command.

So from the sally each obeys  
The unseen almighty nod ;  
So till the ending all their ways  
Blindfolded loth have trod :  
Nor knew their task at all, but were the tools of God.

And as the fervent smith of yore  
Beat out the glowing blade,  
Nor wielded in the front of war  
The weapons that he made,  
But in the tower at home still plied his ringing trade ;

So like a sword the son shall roam  
On nobler missions sent ;  
And as the smith remained at home  
In peaceful turret pent,  
So sits the while at home the mother well content.

## XXVI

## THE SICK CHILD

*Child.* O MOTHER, lay your hand on my brow !  
O mother, mother, where am I now ?  
Why is the room so gaunt and great ?  
Why am I lying awake so late ?

*Mother.* Fear not at all : the night is still.  
Nothing is here that means you ill—  
Nothing but lamps the whole town through,  
And never a child awake but you.

*Child.* Mother, mother, speak low in my ear,  
Some of the things are so great and near,  
Some are so small and far away,  
I have a fear that I cannot say.  
What have I done, and what do I fear,  
And why are you crying, mother dear ?

*Mother.* Out in the city, sounds begin.  
Thank the kind God, the carts come in !  
An hour or two more, and God is so kind,  
The day shall be blue in the window-blind,  
Then shall my child go sweetly asleep,  
And dream of the birds and the hills of sheep.

## XXVII

## IN MEMORIAM F. A. S.

YET, O stricken heart, remember, O remember  
 How of human days he lived the better part.  
 April came to bloom and never dim December  
 Breathed its killing chills upon the head or heart.  
 Doomed to know not Winter, only Spring, a being  
 Trod the flowery April blithely for a while,  
 Took his fill of music, joy of thought and seeing,  
 Came and stayed and went, nor ever ceased to smile.  
 Came and stayed and went, and now when all is  
 finished,  
 You alone have crossed the melancholy stream,  
 Yours the pang, but 'his, O his, the undiminished  
 Undecaying gladness, undeparted dream.  
 All that life contains of torture, toil, and treason,  
 Shame, dishonour, death, to him were but a name.  
 Here, a boy, he dwelt through all the singing season  
 And ere the day of sorrow departed as he came.

*Davos, 1881.*

## XXVIII

## TO MY FATHER

PEACE and her huge invasion to these shores  
 Puts daily home ; innumerable sails  
 Dawn on the far horizon and draw near ;  
 Innumerable loves, uncounted hopes  
 To our wild coasts, not darkling now, approach :

Not now obscure, since thou and thine are there,  
And bright on the lone isle, the foundered reef,  
The long, resounding foreland, Pharos stands.

These are thy works, O father, these thy crown ;  
Whether on high the air be pure, they shine  
Along the yellowing sunset, and all night  
Among the unnumbered stars of God they shine ;  
Or whether fogs arise and far and wide  
The low sea-level drown—each finds a tongue  
And all night long the tolling bell resounds :  
So shine, so toll, till night be overpast,  
Till the stars vanish, till the sun return,  
And in the haven rides the fleet secure.

In the first hour, the seaman in his skiff  
Moves through the unmoving bay, to where the town  
Its earliest smoke into the air upbreathes  
And the rough hazels climb along the beach.  
To the tugg'd oar the distant echo speaks.  
The ship lies resting, where by reef and roost  
Thou and thy lights have led her like a child.

This hast thou done, and I—can I be base ?  
I must arise, O father, and to port  
Some lost, complaining seaman pilot home.

## XXIX

## IN THE STATES

With half a heart I wander here  
As from an age gone by  
A brother—yet though young in years,  
An elder brother, I.

You speak another tongue than mine,  
Though both were English born.  
I towards the night of time decline,  
You mount into the morn.

Youth shall grow great and strong and free,  
But age must still decay :  
To-morrow for the States—for me,  
England and Yesterday.

*San Francisco.*

### XXX

#### A PORTRAIT

I AM a kind of farthing dip,  
Unfriendly to the nose and eyes ;  
A blue-behinded ape, I skip  
Upon the trees of Paradise.

At mankind's feast, I take my place  
In solemn, sanctimonious state,  
And have the air of saying grace  
While I defile the dinner plate.

I am " the smiler with the knife,"  
The battener upon garbage, I —  
Dear Heaven, with such a rancid life,  
Were it not better far to die ?

Yet still, about the human pale,  
I love to scamper, love to race,  
To swing by my irreverent tail  
All over the most holy place ;

And when at length, some golden day,  
 The unfailing sportsman, aiming at,  
 Shall bag, me—all the world shall say :  
*Thank God, and there's an end of that !*

## XXXI

SING clearer, Muse, or evermore be still,  
 Sing truer or no longer sing !  
 No more the voice of melancholy Jacques  
 To wake a weeping echo in the hill ;  
 But as the boy, the pirate of the spring,  
 From the green elm a living linnet takes,  
 One natural verse recapture—then be still.

## XXXII

A CAMP<sup>1</sup>

THE bed was made, the room was fit,  
 By punctual eve the stars were lit ;  
 The air was still, the water ran,  
 No need was there for maid or man,  
 When we put up, my ass and I,  
 At God's green caravanserai.

## XXXIII

THE COUNTRY OF THE CAMISARDS<sup>2</sup>

WE travelled in the print of olden wars,  
 Yet all the land was green,  
 And love we found, and peace,  
 Where fire and war had been.

<sup>1</sup> From *Travels with a Donkey*.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*



They pass and smile, the children of the sword-  
 No more the sword they wield;  
 And O, how deep the corn  
 Along the battlefield!

## XXXIV

## SKERRYVORE

For love of lovely words, and for the sake  
 Of those, my kinsmen and my countrymen,  
 Who early and late in the windy ocean toiled  
 To plant a star for seamen, where was then  
 The surfy haunt of seals and cormorants:  
 I, on the lintel of this cot, inscribe  
 The name of a strong tower.

## XXXV

## SKERRYVORE: THE PARALLEL

Here all is sunny, and when the truant gull  
 Skims the green level of the lawn, his wing  
 Dispetals roses; here the house is framed  
 Of kneaded brick and the plumed mountain pine,  
 Such clay as artists fashion and such wood  
 As the tree-climbing urchin breaks. But there  
 Eternal granite hewn from the living isle  
 And dowelled with brute iron, rears a tower  
 That from its wet foundation to its crown  
 Of glittering glass, stands, in the sweep of winds,  
 Immovable, immortal, eminent.

## XXXVI

*My house*, I say. But hark to the sunny doves  
That make my roof the arena of their loves,  
That gyre about the gable all day long  
And fill the chimneys with their murmurous song :  
*Our house*, they say ; and *mine*, the cat declares  
And spreads his golden fleece upon the chairs ;  
And *mine* the dog, and rises stiff with wrath  
If any alien foot profane the path.  
So too the buck that trimmed my terraces,  
Our whilome gardener, called the garden his ;  
Who now, deposed, surveys my plain abode  
And his late kingdom, only from the road.

## XXXVII

My body which my dungeon is,  
And yet my parks and palaces :—  
Which is so great that there I go  
All the day long to and fro,  
And when the night begins to fall  
Throw down my bed and sleep, while all  
The building hums with wakefulness—  
Even as a child of savages  
When evening takes her on her way,  
(She having roamed a summer's day  
Along the mountain-sides and scalp)  
Sleeps in an antre of that alp :—  
Which is so broad and high that there,  
As in the topless fields of air,  
My fancy soars like to a kite  
And faints in the blue infinite :—

Which is so strong, my strongest throes  
 And the rough world's besieging blows  
 Not break it, and so weak withal,  
 Death ebbs and flows in its loose wall  
 As the green sea in fishers' nets,  
 And tops its topmost parapets :—

Which is so wholly mine that I  
 Can wield its whole artillery,  
 And mine so little, that my soul  
 Dwells in perpetual control,  
 And I but think and speak and do  
 As my dead fathers move me to :—

If this born body of my bones  
 The beggared soul so barely owns,  
 What money passed from hand to hand,  
 What creeping custom of the land,  
 What deed of author or assign,  
 Can make a house a thing of mine ?

## XXXVIII

SAY not of me that weakly I declined  
 The labours of my sires, and fled the sea,  
 The towers we founded and the lamps we lit,  
 To play at home with paper like a child.  
 But rather say : *In the afternoon of time*  
*A strenuous family dusted from its hands*  
*The sand of granite, and beholding far*  
*Along the sounding coast its pyramids*  
*And tall memorials catch the dying sun,*  
*Smiled well content, and to this childish task*  
*Around the fire addressed its evening hours.*

## BOOK II.—IN SCOTS

## 、 TABLE OF COMMON SCOTTISH VOWEL SOUNDS

ae } = open A as in rare,  
ai }

a' }  
au } = AW as in law.  
aw }

ea = open E as in mere, but this with exceptions, as heather =  
heather, wean = wain, lear = lair.

ee }  
ei } = open E as in mere.  
ie }

oa = open O as in more.

ou = doubled O as in poor.

ow = OW as in bower.

u = doubled O as in poor.

ui or ü before R = (say roughly) open A as in rare.

ui or ü before any other consonant = (say roughly) close I as in  
grin

y = open I as in kite.

i = pretty nearly what you please, much as in English, Heaven  
guide the reader through that labyrinth! But in Scots it  
dodges usually from the short I, as in grin, to the open E,  
as in mere. Find and blind, I may remark, are pronounced  
to rhyme with the preterite of grin.

## THE MAKER TO POSTERITY

FAR 'yont amang the years to be  
 When a' we think, an' a' we see,  
 An' a' we luve, 's been dung aje  
     By time's rouch shouter,  
 An' what was richt and wrang for me  
     Lies mangled throu'ther,

It's possible—its hardly mair—  
 That some ane, ripin' after lear—  
 Some auld professor or young heir,  
     If still there's either—  
 May find an' read me, an' be sair  
     Perplexed, puir brither !

*"What tongue does your auld bookie speak?"*  
 He'll spier; an' I, his mou to steik:  
*"No bein' fit to write in Greek,*  
     *I wrote in Lallan,*  
*Dear to my heart as the peat reek,*  
     *Auld as Tantallon.*

*"Few spak it than, an' noo there's nane.*  
*My puir auld sangs lie a' their lane,*

*Their sense, that aince was braw an' plain,  
 Tint a'thegether,  
 Like runes upon a standin' stane  
 Amang the heather.*

*" But think not you the brae to speel ;  
 You, tae, maun chow the bitter peel ;  
 For a' your lear, for a' your skeel,  
     Ye're nane sae lucky ;  
 An' things are mebbe waur than weel  
     For you, my buckie.*

*" The hale concern (baith hens an' eggs,  
 Baith books an' writers, stars an' clegs)  
 Noo stachers upon lowsent legs  
     An' wears awa' ;  
 The tack o' mankind, near the dregs,  
     Rins unco law.*

*" Your book, that in some braw new tongue,  
 Ye wrote or prentit, preached or sung,  
 Will still be just a bairn, an' young  
     In fame an' years,  
 Whan the hale planet's guts are dung  
     About your ears ;*

*" An' you, sair gruppin' to a spar  
 Or whammled wi' some bleezin' star,  
 Cryin' to ken whaur deil ye are,  
     Hame, France, or Flanders—  
 Whang sindry like a railway car  
     An' flie in danders."*

II

ILLE TERRARUM

FRAE nirly, nippin', Eas'lan' breeze,  
 Frae Norlan' snaw, an' haar o' seas,  
 Weel happit in your gairden trees,  
     A bonny bit,  
 Atween the muckle Pentland's knees,  
     Secure ye sit.

Beeches an' aiks entwine their theek,  
 An' firs, a stench, auld-farrant clique.  
 A' simmer day, your chimleys reek,  
     Couthy and bien ;  
 An' here an' there your windies keek  
     Amang the green.

A pickle plats an' paths an' posies,  
 A wheen auld gillyflowers an' roses :—  
 A ring o' wa's the hale encloses  
     Frae sheep or men ;  
 An' there the auld housie beeks an' dozes,  
     A' by her lane.

The gairdner crooks his weary back  
 A' day in the pitaty-track,  
 Or mebbe stops awhile to crack  
     Wi' Jane the cook,  
 Or at some buss, worm-eaten-black,  
     To gie a look.



Frae the high hills the curlew ca's ;  
 The sheep gang baaing by the wa's ;  
 Or whiles a clan o' roosty craws  
     Cangle thegether ;  
 • The wild bees seek the gairden raws,  
     Weariet wi' heather.

Or in the gloamin' douce an' gray  
 The sweet-throat mavis tunes her lay ;  
 The herd comes linkin' doun the brae ;  
     An' by degrees  
 The muckle siller mune maks way  
     Amang the trees.

Here aft hae I, wi' sober heart,  
 For meditation sat apairt,  
 When orra loves or kittle art  
     Perplexed my mind ;  
 Here socht a balm for ilka smart  
     O' humankind.

Here aft, weel neukit by my lane,  
 Wi' Horace, or perhaps Montaigne,  
 The mornin' hours hae come an' gane  
     Abüne my heid—  
 I wadnae gi'en a chucky-stane  
     For a' I'd read.

But noo the auld city, street by street,  
 An' winter fu' o' snaw an' sleet,  
 Awhile shut in my gangrel feet  
     An' goavin' mettle ;  
 Noo is the soopit ingle sweet,  
     An' liltin' kettle.

An' noo the winter winds complain ;  
 Cauld lies the glaur in ilka lane ;  
 On draigled hizzie, tautit wean  
     An' drucken lads,  
 In the mirk nicht, the winter rain  
     Dribbles an' blads.

Whan bugles frae the Castle rock,  
 An' beaten drums wi' dowie shock,  
 Wauken, at cauld-rife sax o'clock,  
     My chitterin' frame,  
 I mind me on the kintry cock,  
     The kintry hame.

I mind me on yon bonny bield ;  
 An' Fancy traivels far afield  
 To gaither a' that gairdens yield  
     O' sun an' Simmer :  
 To hearten up a dowie chield,  
     Fancy's the limmer !

III

WHEN aince Aprile has fairly come,  
 An' birds may bigg in winter's lum,  
 An' pleasure's spreid for a' and some  
     O' whatna state,  
 Love, wi' her auld recruitin' drum,  
     Than taks the gate.

The heart plays dunt wi' main an' nicht;  
 The lasses' een are a' sae bricht,  
 Their dresses are sae braw an' ticht,  
     The bonny birdies !—  
 , Puir winter virtue at the sicht  
     Gangs heels ower hurdies.

An' aye as love frae land to land  
 Tirls the drum wi' eident hand,  
 A' men collect at her command,  
     Toun-bred or land'art,  
 An' follow in a denty band  
     Her gaucy standart.

An' I, wha sang o' rain an' snaw,  
 An' weary winter weel awa',  
 Noo busk me in a jacket braw,  
     An' tak my place  
 I' the ram-stam, harum-scarum raw,  
     Wi' smilin' face.

## IV

## A MILE AN' A BITTOCK

A MILE an' a bittock, a mile or twa,  
 Abüne the burn, ayönt the law,  
 Davie an' Donal' an' Cherlie an' a',  
     An' the mune was shinin' clearly!

Ane went hame wi' the ither, an' then  
 The ither went hame wi' the ither twa men,  
 An' baith wad return him the service again,  
     An' the mune was shinin' clearly!

The clocks were chappin' in house an' ha',  
 Eleeven, twal an' ane an' twa;  
 An' the guidman's face was turnt to the wa',  
     An' the mune was shinin' clearly!

A wind got up frae affa the sea,  
It blew the stars as clear's could be,  
It blew in the een of a' o' the three,  
An' the mune was shinin' clearly !

Noo, Davie was first to get sleep in his head,  
"The best o' frien's maun twine," he said ;  
"I'm weariet, an' here I'm awa' to my bed."  
An' the mune was shinin' clearly !

Twa o' them walkin' an' crackin' their lane,  
The mornin' licht cam gray an' plain,  
An' the birds they yammert on stick an' stane,  
An' the mune was shinin' clearly !

O years ayont, O years awa',  
My lads, ye'll mind whate'er befa'—  
My lads, ye'll mind on the bield o' the law,  
When the mune was shinin' clearly.

## V

## A LOWDEN SABBATH MORN

THE clinkum-clank o' Sabbath bells  
Noo to the hoastin' rookery swells,  
Noo faintin' laigh in shady dells,  
Sounds far an' near,  
An' through the simmer kintry tells  
Its tale o' cheer.

An' noo, to that melodious play,  
A' deidly awn the quiet sway—  
A' ken their solemn holiday,  
Bestial an' human,  
The singin' lintie on the braise,  
The restin' plou'man.

## STEVENSON'S POEMS

He, mair than a' the lave o' men,  
His week completit joys to ken ;  
Half-dressed, he daunders out an' in,  
    Perplext wi' leisure ;  
An' his raxt limbs he'll rax again  
    Wi' painfū' plesure.

The steerin' mither strang afit  
Noo shoos the bairnies but a bit ;  
Noo cries them ben, their Sinday shūit  
    To scart upon them,  
Or sweeties in their pouch to pit,  
    Wi' blessin's on them.

The lasses, clean frae tap to taes,  
Are busked in crunklin' underclaes ;  
The gartened hose, the weel-filled stays,  
    The nakit shift,  
A' bleached on bonny greens for days,  
    An' white's the drift.

An' noo to face the kirkward mile :  
The guidman's hat o' dacent style,  
The blackit shoon, we noo maun fyle  
    As white's the miller :  
A waefū' peety tae, to spile  
    The warth o' siller.

Our Marg'et, aye sae keen to crack,  
Douce-stappin' in the stoury track,  
Her emerald gown a' kiltit back  
    Frae snawy coats,  
White-ankled, leads the kirkward pack  
    Wi' Dauvit Groats.

A thocht ahint, in runkl'd breeks,  
A' spiled wi' lyin' by for weeks,  
The guidman follows closs, an' cleiks  
    The sonsie missis ;  
His sarious face at aince bespeaks  
    The day that this is.

And aye an' while we nearer draw  
To whaur the kirkton lies alaw,  
Mair neebours, comin' saft an' slaw  
    Frae here an' there,  
The thicker thrang the gate an' caw  
    The stour in air.

But hark ! the bells frae nearer clang ;  
To rowst the slaw, their sides they bang ;  
An' see ! black coats a'ready thrang  
    The green kirkyaird ;  
And at the yett, the chestnuts spang  
    That brocht the laird.

The solemn eld'ers at the plate  
Stand drinkin' deep the pride o' state :  
The practised hands as gash an' great  
    As Lords o' Session ;  
The later named, a wee thing blate  
    In their expression.

The prentit stanes that mark the deid  
Wi' lengthened lip, the sarious read ;  
Syne wag a moraleesin' heid,  
    An' then an' there  
Their hirplin' practice an' their creed  
    Try hard to square.

## STEVENSON'S POEMS

It's here our Merren lang has lain,  
A wee bewast the table-stane ;  
An' yon's the grave o' Sandy Blane ;  
    An' further ower,  
The mither's brithers, dacent men !  
    Lie a' the fower.

Here the guidman sall bide awee  
To dwell amang the deid ; to see  
Auld faces clear in fancy's e'e ;  
    Belike to hear  
Auld voices fa'in saft an' slee  
    On fancy's ear.

Thus, on the day o' solemn things,  
The bell that in the steeple swings  
To fauld a scaattered faim'ly rings  
    Its walcome screed ;  
An' just a wee thing nearer brings  
    The quick an' deid.

But noo the bell is ringin' in ;  
To tak their places, folk begin ;  
The minister himsel' will shüne  
    Be up the gate,  
Filled fu' wi' clavers about sin  
    An' man's estate.

The tūnes are up—*French*, to be shüre,  
The faithfū' *French*, an' twa-three mair ;  
The auld prezenter, hoastin' sair,  
    Wales out the portions,  
An' yirks the tūne into the air  
    Wi' queer contortions.

Follows the prayer, the readin' next,  
An' than the fisslin' for the text—  
The twa-three last to find it, vext  
    But kind o' proud;  
An' than the peppermints are raxed,  
    An' southernwood.

For noo's the time whan pows are seen  
Nid-noddin' like a mandareen;  
When tenty mithers stap a preen  
    In sleepin' weans;  
An' nearly half the parochine  
    Forget their pains.

There's just a waukrif' twa or three:  
Thrawn commentautors sweer to 'gree,  
Weans glowrin' at the bumblin' bee  
    On windie-glassès,  
Or lads that tak a keek a-glee  
    At sonsie lasses.

Himsel', meanwhile, frae whaur he cocks  
An' bobs belaw the soundin'-box,  
The treesures of his words unlocks  
    Wi' prodigality,  
An' deals some unco dingin' knocks  
    To infidelity.

Wi' sappy unction, hoo he burkes  
The hopes o' men that trust in works,  
Expounds the fau'ts o' ither kirks,  
    An' shaws the best o' them  
No muckle better than mere Turks,  
    When a's confessed o' them.



Bethankit! what a bonny creed!  
 What mair would ony Christian need?—  
 The braw words rumm'le ower his heid,  
                     Nor steer the sleeper;  
 And in their restin' graves, the deid  
                     Sleep aye the deeper.

NOTE.—It may be guessed by some that I had a certain parish in my eye, and this makes it proper I should add a word of disclamation. In my time there have been two ministers in that parish. Of the first I have a special reason to speak well, even had there been any to think ill. The second I have often met in private and long (in the due phrase) "sat under" in his church, and neither here nor there have I heard an unkind or ugly word upon his lips. The preacher of the text had thus no original in that particular parish; but when I was a boy, he might have been observed in many others; he was then (like the schoolmaster) abroad; and by recent advices, it would seem he has not yet entirely disappeared.

## VI

## THE SPAE'WIFE

O, I wad like to ken—to the beggar-wife says I—  
 Why chops are guid to brander and nane sae guid to  
                     fry.

An' siller, that's sae braw to keep, is brawer still to gi'e.  
 —*It's gey an' easy spierin'*, says the beggar-wife to me.

O, I wad like to ken—to the beggar-wife says I—  
 Hoo a' things come to be whaur we find them when  
                     we try,

The lasses in their claes an' the fishes in the sea.  
 —*It's gey an' easy spierin'*, says the beggar-wife to me.

O, I wad like to ken—to the beggar-wife says I—  
 Why lads are a' to sell an' lasses a' to buy;  
 An' naebody for dacency but barely twa or three  
 —*It's gey an' easy spierin'*, says the beggar-wife to me.

O, I wad like to ken—to the beggar-wife says I—  
 Gin death's as shüre to men as killin' is to kye,  
 Why God has filled the yearth sae fu' o' tasty things  
 to pree.  
 —*It's gey an' easy spierin'*, says the beggar-wife to me.

O, I wad like to ken—to the beggar-wife says I—  
 The reason o' the cause an' the wherefore o' the why,  
 Wi' mony anither riddle brings the tear into my e'e.  
 —*It's gey an' easy spierin'*, says the beggar-wife to me.

## VII

## THE BLAST—1875

It's rainin'. Weet's the gairden sod,  
 Weet the lang roads whaur gangrels plod-  
 A maist unceevil thing o' God  
     In mid July—  
 If ye'll just curse the sneckdraw, dod!  
     An' sae wull I!

He's a braw place in Heev'n, ye ken,  
 An' lea's us puir, forjaskit men  
 Clamjamfried in the but and ben  
     He ca's the earth—  
 A wee bit inconvenient den  
     No muckle worth;

An' whiles, at orra times, keeks out,  
Sees what puir mankind are about ;  
An' if He can, I've little doubt,  
                    Upsets their plans ;  
He hates a' mankind, brainch and root,  
                    An' a' that's man's.

An' whiles, whan they tak heart again,  
An' life i' the sun looks braw an' plain,  
Doun comes a jaw o' droukin' rain  
                    Upon their honours—  
God sends a spate outower the plain,  
                    Or mebbe thun'ers.

Lord safe us, life's an unco thing !  
Simmer an' Winter, Yule an' Spring,  
The damned, dour-heartit seasons bring  
                    A feck o' trouble.  
I wadnae try't to be a king—  
                    No, nor for double.

But since we're in it, willy-nilly,  
We maun be watchfu', wise an' skilly,  
An' no mind ony ither billy,  
                    Lassie nor God.  
But drink—that's my best counsel till 'e :  
                    Sae tak the nod.

## VIII

## THE COUNTERBLAST—1886

My bonny man, the warld, it's true,  
Was made for neither me nor you ;  
It's just a place to warstle through,  
    As Job confessed o't ;  
And aye the best that we'll can do  
    Is mak the best o't.

There's rowth o' wrang, I'm free to say :  
The simmer brunt, the winter blae,  
The face of earth a' fyled wi' clay  
    An' dour wi' chuckies,  
An' life a rough an' land'art play  
    For country buckies.

An' food's anither name for clart ;  
An' beasts an' brambles bite an' scart ;  
An' what would we be like, my heart !  
    If bared o' claethin' ?  
—Aweel, I cannae mend your cart :  
    It's that or naethin'.

A feck o' folk frae first to last  
Have through this queer experience passed ;  
Twa-three, I ken, just damn an' blast  
    The hale transaction ;  
But twa-three ither, east an' wast,  
    Fand satis'action.

Whaur braid the briery muirs expand,  
A waefü' an' a weary land,  
The bumblebees, a gowden band,  
    Are blithely hingin';  
An' there the canty wanderer fand  
    The laverock singin'.

Trout in the burn grow great as herr'n,  
The simple sheep can find their fair'n';  
The wind blows clean about the cairn  
    Wi' caller air;  
The muircock an' the barefit bairn  
    Are happy there.

Sic-like the howes o' life to some:  
Green loans whaur they ne'er fash their thumb,  
But mark the muckle winds that come,  
    Soopin' an' cool,  
Or hear the powrin' burnie drum  
    In the shilfa's pool.

The evil wi' the guid they tak;  
They ca' a gray thing gray, no black;  
To a steigh brae, a stubborn back  
    Addressin' daily;  
An' up the rude, unbiel'dy track  
    O' life, gang gaily.

What you would like's a palace ha',  
Or Sinday parlour dink an' braw  
Wi' a' things ordered in a raw  
    By denty leddies.  
Weel, than, ye cannae hae't: that's a'  
    That to be said is.

An' since at life ye've taen the grue,  
An' winnae blithely hirsle through,  
Ye've fund the very thing to do—  
    That's to drink speerit ;  
An' shüne we'll hear the last o' you—  
    An' blithe to hear it !

The shoon ye coft, the life ye lead,  
[thers will heir when aince ye're deid ;  
They'll heir your tasteless bite o' breid,  
    An' find it sappy ;  
They'll to your dulefü' house succeed,  
    An' there be happy.

As whan a glum an' fractious wean  
Has sat an' sullened by his lane  
Till, wi' a rowstin' skelp, he's taen  
    An' shoo'd to bed—  
The ither bairns a' fa' to play'n',  
    As gleg's a gled.

## IX

## THE COUNTERBLAST IRONICAL

It's strange that God should fash to frame  
    The yearth and lift sae hie,  
An' clean forget to explain the same  
    To a gentleman like me.

They gutsy, donnered ither folk,  
    Their weird they weel may dree ;  
But why present a pig in a poke  
    To a gentleman like me ?

They ither folk their parritch eat  
 An' sup their sugared tea ;  
 But the mind is no to be wyled wi' meat  
 Wi' a gentleman like me.

Thèy ither folk, they court their joes  
 At gloamin' on the lea ;  
 But they're made of a commoner clay, I suppose,  
 Than a gentleman like me.

They ither folk, for richt or wrang,  
 They suffer, bleed, or dee ;  
 But a' thir things are an emp'y sang  
 To a gentleman like me.

It's a different thing that I demand,  
 Tho' humble as can be—  
 A statement fair in my Maker's hand  
 To a gentleman like me :

A clear account writ fair an' broad,  
 An' a plain apologie ;  
 Or the deevil a ceevil word to God  
 From a gentleman like me.

## X

# THEIR LAUREATE TO AN ACADEMY CLASS DINNER CLUB

DEAR Thamson class, whaure'er I gang  
 It aye comes ower me wi' a spang :  
*"Lordsake ! they Thamson lads—(deil hang  
 Or else Lord mend them !)—  
 An' that wanchancy annual sang  
 I ne'er can send them !"*

Straucht, at the name, a trusty tyke,  
 My conscience girrs ahint the dyke;  
 Straucht on my hinderlands I fyke  
     To find a rhyme t' ye;  
 Pleased—although mebbe no pleased-like—  
     To gie my time t' ye.

*"Weel," an' says you, wi' heavin' breist,  
 "Sae fur, sae guid, but what's the neist?  
 Yearly we gaither to the feast,  
     A' hopefu' men—  
 Yearly we skelloch 'Hang the beast—  
     Nae sang again!"*

My lads, an' what am I to say?  
 Ye shürelly ken the Muse's way:  
 Yestreen, as gleg's a tyke—the day,  
     Thrawn like a cuddy:  
 Her conduc', that to her's a play,  
     Deith to a body.

Aft whan I sat an' made my mane,  
 Aft whan I laboured burd-alane  
 Fishin' for rhymes an' findin' nane,  
     Or nane were fit for ye—  
 Ye judged me cauld's a chucky stane—  
     No car'n' a bit for ye!

But saw ye ne'er some pingein' bairn  
 As weak as a pitaty-par'n'—  
 Less üsed wi' guidin' horse-shoe airn  
     Than steerin' crowdie—  
 Packed aff his lane, by moss an' cairn,  
     To ca' the howdie.



Wae's me, for the puir callant than I  
 He wambles like a poke o' bran,  
 An' the lowse rein, as hard's he can,  
     Pu's, trem'lin' handit;  
 Till, blaff! upon his hinderlan'  
     Behauld him landit.

Sic-like—I awn the weary fac'—  
 Whan on my muse the gate I tak,  
 An' see her gleed e'e raxin' back  
     To keek ahint her;—  
 To me, the brig o' Heev'n gangs black  
     As blackest winter.

*"Lordsake! we're aff," thinks I, "but whaur?  
 On what abhorred an' whinny scaur,  
 Or whamml'd in what sea o' glaur,  
     Will she desert me?  
 An' will she just disgrace? or waur—  
     Will she no hurt me?"*

Kittle the quaere! But at least  
 The day I've backed the fashious beast,  
 While she, wi' mony a spang an' reist,  
     Flang heels ower bonnet;  
 An' a' triumphant—for your feast,  
     Hae! there's your sonnet!

## XI

## EMBRO HIE KIRK

THE Lord Himsel' in former days  
 Waled out the proper tunes for praise  
 An' named the proper kind o' claes  
     For folk to preach in :  
 Preceese and in the chief o' ways  
     Important teachin'.

He ordered a' things late and air' ;  
 He ordered folk to stand at prayer,  
 (Although I cannae just mind where  
     He gave the warpin',)  
 An' pit pomatum on their hair  
     On Sabbath mornin'.

The hale o' life by His commands  
 Was ordered to a body's hands ;  
 But see ! this *corpus juris* stands  
     By a' forgotten ;  
 An' God's religion in a' lands  
     Is deid an' rotten.

While thus the lave o' mankind's lost,  
 O' Scotland still God maks His boast—  
 Puir Scotland, on whase barren coast  
     A score or twa  
 Auld wives wi' mutches an' a hoast  
     Still keep His law.

In Scotland, a wheen canty, plain,  
 Douce, kintry-leevin' folk retain  
 The Truth—or did so aince—alane  
     Of a' men leevin';  
 An' noo just twa o' them remain—  
     Just Begg an' Niven.

For noo, unfaithfū', to the Lord  
 Auld Scotland joins the rebel horde;  
 Her human hymn-books on the board  
     She noo displays:  
 An' Embro Hie Kirk's been restored  
     In popish ways.

O *functum temporis* for action  
 To a' o' the reformin' faction,  
 If yet, by ony act or paction,  
     Thocht, word, or sermon,  
 This dark an' damnable transaction  
     Micht yet determine!

For see—as Doctor Begg explains—  
 Hoo easy 't's dune! a pickle weans,  
 Wha in the Hie Street gaither stanes  
     By his instruction,  
 The uncovenantit, pentit panes  
     Ding to destruction.

Up, Niven, or ower late—an' dash  
 Laigh in the glaur that carnal hash;  
 Let spires and pews wi' gran' stramash  
     Thegether fa';  
 The rumlin' kist o' whustles smash  
     In pieces sma'.

Noo choose ye out a walie hammer ;  
 About the knottit buttress clam'er ;  
 Alang the steep roof stoyt an' stammer,  
     A gate mis-chancy ;  
 On the aul' spire, the bells' hie cha'mer,  
     Dance your bit dancie.

Ding, devel, dunt, destroy, an' ruin,  
 Wi' carnal stanes the square bestrewin',  
 Till your loud chaps frae Kyle to Fruin,  
     Frae Hell to Heeven,  
 Tell the guid wark that baith are doin'—  
     Baith Begg an' Niven.

## XII

## THE SCOTSMAN'S RETURN FROM ABROAD

In a letter from Mr. Thomson to Mr. Johnstone.

In mony a foreign pairt I've been,  
 An' mony an unco ferlie seen,  
 Since, Mr. Johnstone, you and I  
 Last walkit upon Cocklerye.  
 Wi' gleg, observant een, I pass't  
 By sea an' land, through East an' Wast,  
 And still in ilka age an' station  
 Saw naething but abomination.  
 In thir uncovenantit lands  
 The gangrel Scot uplifts his hands  
 At lack of a' sectarian fush'n,  
 An' cauld religious destitütion.  
 He rins, puir man, frae place to place,  
 Tries a' their graceless means o' grace,

Preacher on preacher, kirk on kirk—  
This yin a stot an' thon a stirk—  
A bletherin' clan, no warth a preen,  
As bad as Smith of Aiberdeen !

At last, across the weary faem,  
Frae far, outlandish pairts I came.  
On ilka side o' me I fand  
Fresh tokens o' my native land.  
Wi' whatna joy I hailed them a'—  
The hilltaps standin' raw by raw,  
The public house, the Hielan' birks,  
And a' the bonny U.P. kirks !  
But maistly thee, the bluid o' Scots,  
Frae Maidenkirk to John o' Grots,  
The king o' drinks, as I conceive it,  
Talisker, Isla, or Glenlivet !

For after years wi' a pockmantie  
Frae Zanzibar to Alicante,  
In mony a fash and sair affliction  
I gie't as my sincere conviction—  
Of a' their foreign tricks an' pliskies,  
I maist abominate their whiskies.  
Nae doot, themsel's, they ken it weel,  
An' wi' a hash o' leemon peel,  
And ice an' siccan filth, they ettle  
The stawsome kind o' goo to settle ;  
Sic wersh apothecary's broos wi'  
As Scotsmen scorn to fyle their moo's wi'.

An', man, I was a blithe hame-comer  
Whan first I syndit out my rummer.  
Ye should hae s'een me then, wi' care  
The less important pairts prepare ;

Syne, weel contentit wi' it a',  
Pour in the speerits wi' a jaw!  
I didnae drink, I didnae speak,—  
I only snowkit up the reek.  
I was sae pleased therein to paidle,  
I sat an' plowtered wi' my ladle.

An' blithe was I, the morrow's morn,  
To daunder through the stookit corn,  
And after a' my strange mishanthers,  
Sit down amang my ain dissenters.  
An', man, it was a joy to me  
The pu'pit an' the pews to see,  
The pennies dirlin' in the plate,  
The elders lookin' on in state;  
An' 'mang the first, as it befell,  
Wha should I see, sir, but yoursel'.

I was, and I will no deny it,  
At the first gliff a hantle tryit  
To see yoursel' in sic a station—  
It seemed a doubtfu' dispensation.  
The feelin' was a mere digression;  
For shune I understood the session,  
An' mindin' Aiken an' M'Neil,  
I wondered they had dune sae weel.  
I saw I had mysel' to blame;  
For had I but remained at hame,  
Aiblins—though no ava' deservin' 't—  
They micht hae named your humble servant.

The kirk was filled, the door was steeked;  
Up to the pu'pit ance I keeked;  
I was mair pleased than I can tell—  
It was the minister himsel'!

Proud, proud was I to see his face,  
After sae lang awa' frae grace.  
Pleased as I was, I'm no denyin'  
Some maitters were not edifyin' ;  
For first I fand— an' here was news :—  
'Mere hymn-books cockin' in the pews—  
A humanised abomination,  
Unfit for ony congregation.  
Syne, while I still was on the tenter,  
I scunnered at the new prezenter ;  
I thocht him gesterin' an' cauld—  
A sair declension frae the auld.  
Syne, as though a' the faith was wreckit,  
The prayer was not what I'd exspekit.  
Himsel', as it appeared to me,  
Was no the man he üsed to be.  
But just as I, was growin' vext  
He waled a maist judeecious text,  
An', launchin' into his prelections,  
Swoopt, wi' a skirl, on a' defections.

O what a gale was on my speerit  
To hear the p'int's o' doctrine clearit,  
And a' the horrors o' damnation  
Set furth wi' faithfū' ministration !  
Nae shauchlin' testimony here—  
We were a' damned, an' that was clear.  
I owned, wi' gratitude an' wonder,  
He was a pleasure to sit under.

## XIII

LATE in the night in bed I lay,  
The winds were at their weary play,  
An' tirlin' wa's an' skirlin' wae  
Through Heev'n they battered ;—  
On-ding o' hail, on-blaff o' spray,  
The tempest blattered.

The masoned house it dinled through ;  
It dung the ship, it cowped the coo' ;  
The rankit aiks it overthrew,  
Had braved a' weathers ;  
The strang sea-gleds it took an' blew  
Awa' like feathers.

The thraves o' fear on a' were shed,  
An' the hair rose, an' slumber fled,  
An' lights were lit an' prayers were said  
Through a' the kintry ;  
An' the cauld terror clum in bed  
Wi' a' ap' sindry.

To hear in the pit-mirk on hie  
The brangled collieshangie flie,  
The warl', they thocht, wi' land an' sea,  
Itsel' wad cowpit ;  
An' for auld airn, the smashed debris  
By God be rowpit.

Meanwhile frae far Aldeboran,  
To folks wi' talescopes in han',  
O' ships that cowpit, winds that ran,  
Nae sign was seen,  
But the wee warl' in sunshine span  
As bricht's a preen.



I, tae, by God's especial grace,  
 Dwall denty in a bieldy place,  
 Wi' hosened feet, wi' shaven face,  
     Wi' dacent mainners :  
 A grand example to the race  
     O' tautit sinners !

The wind may blaw, the heathen rage,  
 The deil may start on the rampage ;—  
 The sick in bed, the thief in cage—  
     What's a' to me ?  
 Cosh in my house, a sober sage,  
     I sit an' see.

An' whiles the bluid spangs to my bree,  
 To lie sae saft, to live sae free,  
 While better men maun do an' die  
     In 'unco places.  
 “ *Whaur's God ?* ” I cry, an' “ *Whae is me*  
     *To hae sic graces ?* ”

I mind the fecht the 'sailors keep,  
 But fire or can'le, rest or sleep,  
 In darkness an' the muckle deep ;  
     An' mind beside  
 The herd that on the hills o' sheep  
     Has wandered wide.

I mind me on the hoastin' weans—  
 The penny joes on causey stanes—  
 The auld folk wi' the crazy banes,  
     Baith auld an' puir,  
 That aye maun thole the winds an' rains  
     An' labour sair.

An' whiles I'm kind o' pleased a blink,  
An' kind o' fleyed forby, to think,  
For a' my rowth o' meat an' drink  
    An' waste o' crumb,  
I'll mebbe have to thole wi' skink .  
    In Kingdom Come.

For God whan jowes the Judgment bell,  
Wi' His ain Hand, His Leevin' Sel',  
Sall ryve the guid (as Prophets tell)  
    Frae them that had it ;  
And in the reamin' pat o' Hell,  
    The rich be scaddit.

O Lord, if this indeed be sae,  
Let daw that sair an' happy day !  
Again' the warl', grawn auld an' gray,  
    Up wi' your aixe !  
An' let the puir enjoy their play—  
    I'll thole my paiks.

## XIV

## MY CONSCIENCE !

OF a' the ills that flesh can fear,  
The loss o' frien's, the lack o' gear,  
A yowlin' tyke, a glandered mear,  
    A lassie's nonsense—  
There's just ae thing I cannae bear,  
    An' that's my conscience.

## STEVENSON'S POEMS

Whan day (an' a' excūse) has gane,  
 An' wark is dūne, and duty's plain,  
 An' to my chalmer a' my lane  
     I creep apairt,  
 My conscience! hoo the yammerin' pain  
     Stends to my heart!

A' day wi' various ends in view  
 The hairsts o' time I had to pu',  
 An' made a hash wad staw a soo,  
     Let be a man!—  
 My conscience! whan my han's were fu',  
     Whaur were ye than?

An' there were a' the lures o' life,  
 There pleasure skirlin' on the fife,  
 There anger, wi' the hotchin' knife  
     Ground shairp in Hell—  
 My conscience!—you that's like a wife!—  
     Whaur was yoursel'?

I ken it fine: just waitin' here,  
 To gar the evil waur appear,  
 To clart the guid, confūse the clear,  
     Mis-ca' the great,  
 My conscience! an' to raise a steer  
     Whan a's ower late.

Sic-like, some tyke grawn auld and blind,  
 Whan thieves brok' through the gear to p'ind,  
 Has lain his dozened length an' grinned  
     At the disaster;  
 An' the morn's mornin', wud's the wind,  
     Yokes on his master.

## XV

## TO DOCTOR JOHN BROWN.

*(Whan the dear doctor, dear to a',  
Was still amang us here below,  
I set my pipes his praise to blaw  
    Wi' a' my speerit;  
But noo, Dear Doctor! he's awa',  
    An' ne'er can hear it.)*

By Lyne and Tyne, by Thames and Tees,  
By a' the various river-Dee's,  
In Mars and Manors 'yont the seas  
    Or here at hame,  
Whaure'er there's kindly folk to please,  
    They ken your name.

They ken your name, they ken your tyke,  
They ken the honey from your byke;  
But mebbe after a' your fyke,  
    (The truth to tell)  
It's just your honest Rab they like,  
    An' no yoursel'.

As at the gowff, some canny play'r  
Should tee a common ba' wi' care—  
Should flourish and deleeve fair  
    His souple shintie—  
An' the ba' rise into the air,  
    A leevin' lintie:

Sae in the game we writers play,  
There comes to some a bonny day,  
When a dear ferlie shall repay  
    Their years o' strife,  
An' like your Rab, their things o' clay,  
    Spreid wings o' life.

Ye scarce deserved it, I'm afraid—  
You that had never learned the trade,  
But just some idle mornin' strayed  
    Into the schüle,  
An' picked the fiddle up an' played  
    Like Neil himsel'.

Your e'e was gleg, your fingers dink;  
Ye didnae fash yoursel' to think,  
But wove, as fast as puss can link,  
    Your denty wab:—  
Ye stapped your pen into the ink,  
    An' there was Rab!

Sinsyne, whaure'er your fortune lay  
By dowie den, by canty brae,  
Simmer an' winter, nicht an' day,  
    Rab was aye wi' ye;  
An' a' the folk on a' the way  
    Were blithe to see ye.

O sir, the gods are kind indeed,  
An' hauld ye for an honoured heid,  
That for a wee bit clarkit screed  
    Sae weel reward ye,  
An' lend—puir Rabbie bein' deid—  
    His ghaist to guard ye.

For though, whaur'e'er yoursel' may be,  
We've just to turn an' glisk a wee,  
An' Rab at heel we're shüre to see

    Wi' gladsome caper :—  
The bogle of a bogle, he—  
    A ghaist o' paper !

And as the auld-farrand hero sees  
In Hell a bogle Hercules,  
Pit there the lesser deid to please,  
    While he himsel'  
Dwalls wi' the muckle gods at ease  
    Far raised frae hell :

Sae the true Rabbie far has gane  
On kindlier business o' his ain  
Wi' aulder frien's ; an' his breist-bane  
    An' stumpie tailie,  
He birstles at a new hearth stane  
    By James and Ailie.

## XVI

It's an owercome sooth for age an' youth,  
And it brooks wi' nae denial,  
That the dearest friends are the auldest friends,  
And the young are just on trial.

There's a rival bauld wi' young an' auld,  
And it's him that has bereft me ;  
For the sürest friends are the auldest friends,  
And the maist o' mines hae left me.

There are kind hearts still, for friends to fill  
And fools to take and break them ;  
But the nearest friends are the auldest friends,  
And the grave's the place to seek them.

## BALLADS





# THE SONG OF RAHÉRO

## A LEGEND OF TAHITI

### TO ORI A ORI

ORI, my brother in the island mode,  
In every tongue and meaning much my friend,  
This story of your country and your clan,  
In your loved house, your too much honoured guest,  
I made in English. Take it, being done;  
And let me sign it with the name you gave.

TERIITERA.

### I. THE SLAYING OF TÁMATÉA

It fell in the days of old, as the men of Taiárapu tell,  
A youth went forth to the fishing, and fortune  
favoured him well.

Támatéa his name: gullible, simple, and kind,  
Comely of countenance, nimble of body, empty of  
mind,

His mother ruled him and loved him beyond the wont  
of wife,

Serving the lad for eyes and living herself in his life.

Alone from the sea and the fishing came Támatéa the fair,  
Urging his boat to the beach, and the mother awaited him there,  
—"Long may you live!" said she. "Your fishing has sped to a wish.  
And now let us choose for the king the fairest of all your fish.  
For fear inhabits the palace and grudging grows in the land,  
Marked is the sluggardly foot and marked the niggardly hand,  
The hours and the miles are counted, the tributes numbered and weighed,  
And woe to him that comes short, and woe to him that delayed!"

So spoke on the beach the mother, and counselled the wiser thing.  
For Rahéro stirred in the country and secretly mined the king.  
Nor were the signals wanting of how the leaven wrought,  
In the cords of obedience loosed and the tributes grudgingly brought.  
And when last to the temple of Oro the boat with the victim sped,  
And the priest uncovered the basket and looked on the face of the dead,  
Trembling fell upon all at sight of an ominous thing,  
For there was the aito<sup>1</sup> dead, and he of the house of the king.

So spake on the beach the mother, matter worthy of  
note,  
And watted a basket well, and chose a fish from the  
boat ;  
And Támatéa the pliable shouldered the basket and  
went,  
And travelled, and sang as he travelled, a lad that was  
well content.  
Still the way of his going was round by the roaring  
coast,  
Where the ring of the reef is broke and the trades run  
riot the most.  
On his left, with smoke as of battle, the billows  
battered the land ;  
Unscalable, turreted mountains rose on the inner  
hand.  
And cape, and village, and river, and vale, and moun-  
tain above,  
Each had a name in the land for men to remember  
and love ;  
And never the name of a place, but lo ! a song in its  
praise :  
Ancient and unforgotten, songs of the earlier days,  
That the elders taught to the young, and at night, in  
the full of the moon,  
Garlanded boys and maidens sang together in tune.  
Támatéa the placable went with a lingering foot ;  
He sang as loud as a bird, he whistled hoarse as a  
flute ;  
He broiled in the sun, he breathed in the grateful  
shadow of trees,  
In the icy stream of the rivers he waded over the  
knees ;

And still in his empty mind crowded, a thousand-fold,  
The deeds of the strong and the songs of the cunning  
heroes of old.

And now was he come to a place Taiárapu honoured  
most,  
Where a silent valley of woods debouched on the noisy  
coast,  
Spewing a level river. There was a haunt of Pai.<sup>2</sup>  
There in his potent youth, when his parents drove him  
to die,  
Honoura lived like a beast, lacking the lamp and the  
fire,  
Washed by the rains of the trade and clotting his hair  
in the mire ;  
And there, so mighty his hands, he bent the tree to his  
foot—  
So keen the spur of his hunger, he plucked it naked  
of fruit.  
There, as she pondered the clouds for the shadow of  
coming ills,  
Ahupu, the woman of song, walked on high on the hills.  
Of these was Rahéro sprung, a man of a godly race ;  
And inherited cunning of spirit and beauty of body and  
face.  
Of yore in his youth, as an aito, Rahéro wandered the  
land,  
Delighting maids with his tongue, smiting men with  
his hand.  
Famous he was in his youth ; but before the midst of  
his life  
Paused, and fashioned a song of farewell to glory and  
strife.

*House of mine (it went), house upon the sea,  
Belov'd of all my fathers, more belov'd by me !  
Vale of the strong Honoura, deep ravine of Pai,  
Again in your woody summits I hear the trade-wind  
cry.*

*House of mine, in your walls, strong sounds the sea,  
Of all sounds on earth, dearest sound to me.  
I have heard the applause of men, I have heard it  
arise and die :  
Sweeter now in my house I hear the trade-wind cry.*

These were the words of his singing, other the thought  
of his heart ;  
For secret desire of glory vexed him, dwelling apart.  
Lazy and crafty he was, and loved to lie in the  
sun,  
And loved the cackle of talk and the true word uttered  
in fun ;  
Lazy he was, his roof was ragged, his table was lean,  
And the fish swam safe in his sea, and he gathered the  
near and the green.  
He sat in his house and laughed, but he loathed the  
king of the land,  
And he uttered the grudging word under the covering  
hand.  
Treason spread from his door ; and he looked for a  
day to come,  
A day of the crowding people, a day of the summoning  
drum,  
When the vote should be taken, the king be driven  
forth in disgrace,  
And Rahéro, the laughing and lazy, sit and rule in his  
place.

Here Tāmátéa came, and beheld the house on the  
brook ;  
And Rahéro was there by the way and covered an  
oven to cook.<sup>3</sup>  
Naked he was to the loins, but the tattoo covered the  
lack,  
And the sun and the shadow of palms dappled his  
muscular back.  
Swiftly he lifted his head at the fall of the coming feet,  
And the water sprang in his mouth with a sudden  
desire of meat ;  
For he marked the basket carried, covered from flies  
and the sun ;<sup>4</sup>  
And Rahéro buried his fire, but the meat in his house  
was done.

Forth he stepped ; and took, and delayed the boy, by  
the hand ;  
And vaunted the joys of meat and the ancient ways  
of the land :  
—“ Our sires of old in Taiárapu, they that created the  
race,  
Ate ever with eager hand, nor regarded season or place,  
Ate in the boat at the oar, on the way afoot ; and at  
night  
Arose in the midst of dreams to rummage the house  
for a bite.  
It is good for the youth in his turn to follow the way  
of the sire ;  
And behold how fitting the time ! for here do I cover  
my fire.”  
—“ I see the fire for the cooking, but never the meat  
to cook,”

Said Támatéa.—“ Tut !” said Rahéro. “ Here in the  
brook  
And there in the tumbling sea, the fishes are thick as  
flies,  
Hungry like healthy men, and like pigs for savour and  
size :  
Crayfish crowding the river, sea-fish thronging the  
sea.”  
—“ Well it may be,” says the other, “ and yet be  
nothing to me.  
Fain would I eat, but alas ! I have needful matter in  
hand,  
Since I carry my tribute of fish to the jealous king of  
the land.”

Now at the word a light sprang in Rahéro's eyes.  
“ I will gain me a dinner,” thought he, “ and lend the  
king a surprise.”  
And he took the lad by the arm, as they stood by the  
side of the track,  
And smiled, and rallied, and flattered, and pushed him  
forward and back.  
It was “ You that sing like a bird, I never have heard  
you sing,”  
And “ The lads when I was a lad were none so feared  
of a king.  
And of what account is an hour, when the heart is  
empty of guile ?  
But come, and sit in the house and laugh with the  
women awhile ;  
And I will but drop my hook, and behold ! the dinner  
made.”



So Tāmatēa the pliable hung up his fish in the shade  
On a tree by the side of the way ; and Rahéro carried  
him in,  
Smiling as smiles the fowler when flutters the bird to  
the gin,  
And chose him a shining hook,<sup>5</sup> and viewed it with  
sedulous eye,  
And breathed and burnished it well on the brawn of  
his naked thigh,  
And set a mat for the gull, and bade him be merry  
and bid<sup>2</sup>,  
Like a man concerned for his guest, and the fishing,  
and nothing beside.

Now when Rahéro was forth, he paused and hearkened,  
and heard  
The gull jest in the house and the women laugh at his  
word ;  
And stealthily crossed to the side of the way, to the  
shady place  
Where the basket hung on a mango ; and craft trans-  
figured his face.  
Deftly he opened the basket, and took of the fat of the  
fish,  
The cut of kings and chieftains, enough for a goodly  
dish.  
This he wrapped in a leaf, set on the fire to cook  
And buried ; and next the marred remains of the tribute  
he took,  
And doubled and packed them well, and covered the  
basket close  
—"There is a buffet, my king," quoth he, "and a  
nauseous dose !"—

And hung the basket again in the shade, in a cloud of flies

—"And there is a sauce to your dinner, king of the crafty eyes!"

Soon as the oven was open, the fish smelt excellent good.

In the shade, by the house of Rahéro, down they sat to their food,

And cleared the leaves<sup>6</sup> in silence, or uttered a jest and laughed,

And raising the cocoanut bowls, buried their faces and quaffed.

But chiefly in silence they ate; and soon as the meal was done,

Rahéro feigned to remember and measured the hour by the sun,

And "Támatéa," quoth he, "it is time to be jogging, my lad."

So Támatéa arose, doing ever the thing he was bade,  
And carelessly shouldered the basket, and kindly saluted his host;

And again the way of his going was round by the roaring coast.

Long he went; and at length was aware of a pleasant green,

And the stems and shadows of palms, and roofs of lodges between.

There sate, in the door of his palace, the king on a kingly seat,

And aitos stood armed around, and the yottowas<sup>7</sup> sat at his feet.

But fear was a worm in his heart : fear darted his eyes ;  
And he probed men's faces for treasons and pondered  
their speech for lies.

To him came Támatéa, the basket slung in his hand,  
And paid him the due obeisance standing as vassals  
stand.

In silence hearkened the king, and closed the eyes in  
his face,

Harbouring odious thoughts and the baseless fears of  
the base ;

In silence accepted the gift and sent the giver away.

So Támatéa departed, turning his back on the day.

And lo ! as the king sat brooding, a rumour rose in the  
crowd ;

The yottowas nudged and whispered, the commons  
murmured aloud ;

Tittering fell upon all at sight of the impudent thing,  
At the sight of a gift unroyal flung in the face of a king.  
And the face of the king turned white and red with  
anger and shame

In their midst ; and the heart in his body was water  
and then was flame ;

Till of a sudden, turning, he gripped an aito hard,  
A youth that stood with his ómare,<sup>8</sup> one of the daily  
guard,

And spat in his ear a command, and pointed and  
uttered a name,

And hid in the shade of the house his impotent anger  
and shame.

Now Támatéa the fool was far on the homeward way,  
The rising night in his face, behind him the dying day.

Rahéro saw him go by, and the heart of Rahéro was  
 glad,  
 Devising shame to the king and nowise harm to the lad;  
 And all that dwelt by the way saw and saluted him well,  
 For he had the face of a friend and the news of the  
 town to tell;  
 And pleased with the notice of folk, and pleased that  
 his journey was done,  
 Támatéa drew homeward, turning his back to the sun.

And now was the hour of the bath in 'Táiarapu: far  
 and near  
 The lovely laughter of bathers rose and delighted his  
 ear.  
 Night massed in the valleys; the sun on the mountain  
 coast  
 Struck, end-long; and above the clouds embattled their  
 host,  
 And glowed and gloomed on the heights; and the  
 heads of the palms were gems,  
 And far to the rising eve extended the shade of their  
 stems;  
 And the shadow of Támatéa hovered already at home.

And sudden the sound of one coming and running light  
 as the foam  
 Struck on his ear; and he turned, and lo! a man on  
 his track,  
 Girded and armed with an ómare, following hard at  
 his back.  
 At a bound the man was upon him;—and, or ever  
 a word was said,  
 The loaded end of the ómare fell and laid him dead.

## II. THE VENGEING OF TÁMATÉA

Thus was Rahéro's treason; thus and no further it  
sped.

The king sat safe in his place and a kindly fool was  
dead.

But the mother of Támatéa arose with death in her  
eyes.

All night long, and the next, Taiárapu rang with her  
cries.

As when a babe in the wood turns with a chill of doubt  
And perceives nor home, nor friends, for the trees have  
closed her about,

The mountain rings' and her breast is torn with the  
voice of despair:

So the lion-like woman idly wearied the air

For awhile, and pierced men's hearing in vain, and  
wounded their hearts.

But as when the weather changes at sea, in dangerous  
parts,

And sudden the hurricane wrack unrolls up the front  
of the sky,

At once the ship lies idle, the sails hang silent on  
high,

The breath of the wind that blew is blown out like the  
flame of a lamp,

And the silent armies of death draw near with in-  
audible tramp:

So sudden, the voice of her weeping ceased; in silence  
she rose

And passed from the house of her sorrow, a woman  
 clothed with repose,  
 Carrying death in her breast and sharpening death  
 with her hand.

Hither she went and thither in all the coasts of the  
 land.

They tell that she feared not to slumber alone, in the  
 dead of night,

In accursed places; beheld, unblenched, the ribbon  
 of light<sup>9</sup>

Spin from temple to temple; guided the perilous  
 skiff,

Abhorred not the paths of the mountain and trod the  
 verge of the cliff;

From end to end of the island, thought not the dis-  
 tance long,

But forth from king to king carried the tale of her  
 wrong.

To king after king, as they sat in the palace door, she  
 came,

Claiming kinship, declaiming verses, naming her  
 name

And the names of all of her fathers; and still, with a  
 heart on the rack,

Jested to capture a hearing and laughed when they  
 jested back:

So would deceive them awhile, and change and return  
 in a breath,

And on all the men of Vaiau imprecate instant death;  
 And tempt her kings—for Vaiau was a rich and  
 prosperous land,

And flatter—for who would attempt it but warriors  
mighty of hand ?  
And change in a breath again and rise in a strain of  
song,  
Invoking the beaten drums, beholding the fall of the  
strong,  
Calling the fowls of the air to come and feast on the  
dead.  
And they held the chin in silence, and heard her, and  
shook the head ;  
For they knew the men of Taiárapu famous in battle  
and feast,  
Marvellous eaters and smiters : the men of Vaiau not  
least.

To the land of the Námunu-úra,<sup>10</sup> to Paea, at length  
she came,  
To men who were foes to the Tevas and hated their  
race and name.  
There was she well received, and spoke with Hiopa  
the king.<sup>11</sup>  
And Hiopa listened, and weighed, and wisely con-  
sidered the thing.  
“ Here in the back of the isle we dwell in a sheltered  
place,”  
Quoth he to the woman, “ in quiet, a weak and peace-  
able race.  
But far in the teeth of the wind lofty Taiárapu lies ;  
Strong blows the wind of the trade on its seaward  
face, and cries  
Aloud in the top of arduous mountains, and utters its  
song,

In green continuous forests. Strong is the wind, and strong

And fruitful and hardy the race, famous in battle and feast,

Marvellous eaters and smiters : the men of Vaiau not least.

Now hearken to me, my daughter, and hear a word of the wise :

How a strength goes linked with a weakness, two by two, like the eyes.

They can wield the ómare well and cast ~~the javelin~~ far ;

Yet are they greedy and weak as the swine and the children are.

Plant we, then, here at Paea, a garden of excellent fruits ;

Plant we bananas and kava and taro, the king of roots ;

Let the pigs in Paea be tapu<sup>12</sup> and no man fish for a year ;

And of all the meat in Tahiti gather we threefold here.

So shall the fame of our plenty fill the island, and so, At last, on the tongue of rumour, go where we wish it to go.

Then shall the pigs of Taiárapu raise their snouts in the air ;

But we sit quiet and wait, as the fowler sits by the snare,

And tranquilly fold our hands, till the pigs come nosing the food :

But meanwhile build us a house of Trotéa, the stubborn wood,



Bind it with incombustible thongs, set a roof to the  
room,  
Too strong for the hands of a man to dissever or fire  
to consume;  
And there, when the pigs come trotting, there shall  
the feast be spread,  
There shall the eye of the morn enlighten the feasters  
dead.  
So be it done; for I have a heart that pities your  
state,  
And Natevā and Námunu-úra are fire and water for  
hate."  
All was done as he said, and the gardens prospered;  
and now  
The fame of their plenty went out, and word of it  
came to Vaiau.  
For the men of Námunu-úra sailed, to the windward  
far,  
Lay in the offing by south where the towns of the  
Tevas are,  
And cast overboard of their plenty; and lo! at the  
Tevas' feet  
The surf on all of the beaches tumbled treasures of  
meat.  
In the salt of the sea, a harvest tossed with the re-  
fluent foam;  
And the children gleamed it in playing, and ate and  
carried it home;  
And the elders stared and debated, and wondered and  
passed the jest,  
But whenever a guest came by eagerly questioned the  
guest;  
And little by little, from one to another, the word  
went round:

"In all the borders of Paea the victual rots on the  
 ground,  
 And swine are plenty as rats. And now, when they  
 fare to the sea,  
 The men of the Námunu-úra glean from under the  
 tree  
 And load the canoe to the gunwale with all that is  
 toothsome to eat;  
 And all day long on the sea the jaws are crushing the  
 meat,  
 The steersman eats at the helm, the rowers munch at  
 the oar,  
 And at length, when their bellies are full, overboard  
 with the store!"  
 Now was the word made true, and soon as the bait  
 was bare,  
 All the pigs of Taiárapu raised their snouts in the air.  
 Songs were recited, and kinship was counted, and  
 tales were told  
 How war had severed of late but peace had cemented  
 of old  
 The clans of the island. "To war," said they, "now  
 set we an end,  
 And hie to the Námunu-úra even as a friend to a  
 friend."

So judged, and a day was named; and soon as the  
 morning broke,  
 Canoes were thrust in the sea, and the houses emptied  
 of folk.  
 Strong blew the wind of the south, the wind that  
 gathers the clan;

Along all the line of the reef the clamorous surges ran ;  
And the clouds were piled on the top of the island  
mountain-high,

A mountain throned on a mountain. The fleet of  
canoes swept by

In the midst, on the green lagoon, with a crew re-  
leased from care,

Sailing an even water, breathing a summer air,  
Cheered by a cloudless sun ; and ever to left and

— right.  
Bursting stage on the reef, drenching storms on the  
height.

So the folk of Vaiau sailed and were glad all day,  
Coasting the palm-tree cape and crossing the populous  
bay

By all the towns of the Texas ; and still as they  
bowled along,

Boat would answer boat with jest and laughter and  
song,

And the people of all the towns trooped to the sides  
of the sea

And gazed from under the hand or sprang aloft on the  
tree,

Hailing and cheering. Time failed them for more to do ;  
The holiday village careened to the wind, and was  
gone from view

Swift as a passing bird ; and ever as onward it bore,  
Like the cry of the passing bird, bequeathed its song  
to the shore—

Desirable laughter of maids and the cry of delight of  
the child.

And the gazer, left behind, stared at the wake and  
smiled.

By all the towns of the Tevas they went, and Pápara  
 last,  
 The home of the chief, the place of muster in war ;  
 and passed  
 The march of the lands of the clan, to the lands of an  
 alien folk.  
 And there, from the dusk of the shoreside palms, a  
 column of smoke  
 Mounted and wavered and died in the gold of the  
 setting sun,  
 "Paea !" they cried. "It is Paea." And so was the  
 voyage done.

In the early fall of the night, Hiopa came to the shore,  
 And beheld and counted the comers, and lo, they were  
 forty score :  
 The pelting feet of the babes that ran already and  
 played,  
 The clean-lipped smile of the boy, the slender breasts  
 of the maid,  
 And mighty limbs of women, stalwart mothers of men.  
 The sires stood forth unabashed ; but a little back  
 from his ken  
 Clustered the scarcely nubile, the lads and maids, in  
 a ring,  
 Fain of each other, afraid of themselves, aware of the  
 king  
 And aping behaviour, but clinging together with  
 hands and eyes,  
 With looks that were kind like kisses, and laughter  
 tender as sighs.  
 There, too, the grandsire stood, raising his silver crest,

And the impotent hands of a suckling groped in his  
barren breast.

The childhood of love, the pair well married, the  
innocent brood,

The tale of the generations repeated and ever renewed—

Hiopa beheld them together, all the ages of man,

And a moment shook in his purpose.

But these were the foes of his clan,  
And he trod upon pity, and came, and civilly greeted  
the king,

And gravely entreated Rahéro ; and for all that could  
fight or sing,

And claimed a name in the land, had fitting phrases  
of praise ;

But with all who were well-descended he spoke of the  
ancient days.

And "'Tis true," said he, "that in Paea the victual  
rots on the ground ;

But, friends, your number is many ; and pigs must be  
hunted and found,

And the lads troop to the mountains to bring the féis  
down,

And around the bowls of the kava cluster the maids  
of the town.

So, for to-night, sleep here ; but king, common, and  
priest

To-morrow, in order due, shall sit with me in the feast."

Sleepless the live-long night, Hiopa's followers toiled.

The pigs screamed and were slaughtered ; the spars  
of the guest-house oiled,

The leaves spread on the floor. In many a mountain  
glen

The moon drew shadows of trees on the naked bodies  
of men

Plucking and bearing fruits ; and in all the bounds of  
the town

Red glowed the cocoanut fires, and were buried and  
trodden down.

Thus did seven of the yottowas toil with their tale of  
the clan,

But the eighth wrought with his lads, hid from the  
sight of man.

In the deeps of the woods they laboured, piling the  
fuel high

In fagots, the load of a man, fuel seasoned and dry,  
Thirsty to seize upon fire and apt to blurt into flame.

And now was the day of the feast. The forests, as  
morning came,

Tossed in the wind, and the peaks quaked in the blaze  
of the day

And the cocoanuts showered on the ground, rebound-  
ing and rolling away :

A glorious morn for a feast, a famous wind for a fire.  
To the hall of feasting Hiopa led them, mother and  
sire

And maid and babe in a tale, the whole of the holiday  
throng.

Smiling they came, garlanded green, not dreaming of  
wrong ;

And for every three, a pig, tenderly cooked in the  
ground,

Waited ; and féi, the staff of life, heaped in a mound  
For each where he sat ;—for each, bananas roasted  
and raw

Piled with a bountiful hand, as for horses hay and  
straw

Are stacked in a stable; and fish, the food of  
desire,<sup>13</sup>

And plentiful vessels of sauce, and breadfruit gilt in  
the fire;—

And kava was common as water. Feasts have there  
been ere now,

And many, but never a feast like that of the folk of

All day long<sup>14</sup> they ate with the resolute greed of brutes,  
And turned from the pigs to the fish, and again from  
the fish to the fruits,

And emptied the vessels of sauce, and drank of the  
kava deep;

Till the young lay stupid as stones, and the strongest  
nodded to sleep.<sup>15</sup>

Sleep that was mighty as death and blind as a moon-  
less night

Tethered them hand and foot; and their souls were  
drowned, and the light

Was cloaked from their eyes. Senseless together, the  
old and the young,

The fighter deadly to smite and the prater cunning of  
tongue,

The woman wedded and fruitful, inured to the pangs  
of birth,

And the maid that knew not of kisses, blindly sprawled  
on the earth.

From the hall Hiopa the king and his chiefs came  
stealthily forth.

Already the sun hung low and enlightened the peaks  
of the north;

But the wind was stubborn to die and blew as it  
blows at morn,

Showering the nuts in the dusk, and e'en as a banner  
is torn,

High on the peaks of the island, shattered the moun-  
tain cloud.

And now at once, at a signal, a silent emulous crowd  
Set hands to the work of death, hurrying to and fro,

Like ants, to furnish the fagots, building them ~~br~~<sup>bra</sup> -  
and low,

And piling them high and higher around the walls of  
the hall.

Silence persisted within, for sleep lay heavy on all ;

But the mother of Támatéa stood at Hiopa's side,

And shook for terror and joy like a girl that is a bride.

Night fell on the toilers, and first Hiopa the wise

Made the round of the house, visiting all with his eyes ;

And all was piled to the eaves, and fuel blockaded the  
door ;

And within, in the house beleaguered, slumbered the  
forty score.

Then was an aito dispatched and came with fire in his  
hand,

And Hiopa took it.—“ Within,” said he, “ is the life  
of a land ;

And behold ! I breathe on the coal, I breathe on the  
dales of the east,

And silence falls on forest and shore ; the voice of the  
feast

I squenched, and the smoke of cooking ; the rooftree  
decays and falls

On the empty lodge, and the winds subvert deserted  
walls.”



Therewithal, to the fuel, he laid the glowing coal ;  
And the redness ran in the mass and burrowed within  
like a mole,

And copious smoke was conceived. But, as when a  
dam is to burst,

The water lips it and crosses in silver trickles at first,  
And then, of a sudden, whelms and bears it away  
forthright :

~~So~~ now, in a moment, the flame sprang and towered  
in the night,

And wrestled and roared in the wind, and high over  
house and tree,

Stood, like a streaming torch, enlightening land and  
sea.

But the mother of Tāmatēa threw her arms abroad,  
“Pyre of my son,” she shouted, “debited vengeance  
of God,

Late, late, I behold you, yet I behold you at last,  
And glory beholding ! For now are the days of my  
agony past,

The lust that famished my soul now eats and drinks  
its desire,

And they that encompassed my son shrivel alive in  
the fire.

Tenfold precious the vengeance that comes after  
lingering years !

Ye quenched the voice of my singer ?—hark, in your  
dying ears,

The song of the conflagration ! Ye left me a widow  
alone ?

—Behold, the whole of your race consumes, sinew  
and bone

And torturing flesh together : man, mother, and maid  
Heaped in a common shambles ; and already, borne  
by the trade,  
The smoke of your dissolution darkens the stars of  
night."

Thus she spoke, and her stature grew in the people's  
sight.

### III. RAHÉRO

RAHÉRO was there in the hall asleep : beside him his  
wife,  
Comely, a mirthful woman, one that delighted in life ;  
And a girl that was ripe for marriage, shy and sly as  
a mouse ;  
And a boy, a climber of trees : all the hopes of his  
house.  
Unwary, with open hands, he slept in the midst of his  
folk,  
And dreamed that he heard a voice crying without,  
and awoke,  
Leaping blindly afoot like one from a dream that he  
fears.  
A hellish glow and clouds were about him ;—it roared  
in his ears  
Like the sound of the cataract fall that plunges sudden  
and steep ;  
And Rahéro swayed as he stood, and his reason was  
still asleep. ,  
Now the flame struck hard on the house, wind-wielded,  
a fracturing blow,

And the end of the roof was burst and fell on the  
sleepers below;

And the lofty hall, and the feast, and the prostrate  
bodies of folk,

Stone red in his eyes a moment, and then were  
swallowed of smoke.

In the mind of Rahéro clearness came; and he opened  
his throat;

And as when a squall comes sudden, the straining sail  
~~of the boat~~

Thunders aloud and bursts, so thundered the voice of  
the man.

—"The wind and the rain!" he shouted, the mustering  
word of the clan,<sup>14</sup>

And "up!" and "to arms, men of Vaiau!" But  
silence replied,

Or only the voice of the gusts of the fire, and nothing  
beside.

Rahéro stooped and groped. He handled his woman-  
kind,

But the fumes of the fire and the kava had quenched  
the life of their mind,

And they lay like pillars prone; and his hand en-  
countered the boy,

And there sprang in the gloom of his soul a sudden  
lightning of joy.

"Him can I save!" he thought, "if I were speedy  
enough."

And he loosened the cloth from his loins, and swaddled  
the child in the stuff;

And about the strength of his neck he knotted the  
burden well.

There where the roof had fallen, it roared like the  
mouth of hell.

Thither Rahéro went, stumbling on senseless folk,  
And grappled a post of the house, and began to climb  
in the smoke :

The last alive of Vaiau ; and the son borne by the sire.  
The post glowed in the grain with ulcers of eating fire,  
And the fire bit to the blood and mangled his hands  
and thighs ;

And the fumes sang in his head like wine and stung in  
his eyes ;

And still he climbed, and came to the top, the place  
of proof,

And thrust a hand through the flame, and clambered  
alive on the roof.

But even as he did so, the wind, in a garment of flames  
and pain,

Wrapped him from head to heel ; and the waistcloth  
parted in twain ;

And the living fruit of his loins dropped in the fire  
below.

About the blazing feast-house clustered the eyes of the  
foe,

Watching, hand upon weapon, lest ever a soul should  
flee,

Shading the brow from the glare, straining the neck  
to see

Only, to leeward, the flames in the wind swept far  
and wide,

And the forest sputtered on fire ; and there might no  
man abide.

Thither Rahéro crept, and dropped from the burning  
eaves,

And crouching low to the ground, in a treble covert of  
leaves

And fire and volleying smoke, ran for the life of his soul  
Unseen; and behind him under a furnace of ardent coal,  
Cairned with a wonder of flame, and blotting the  
night with smoke,

Blazed and were smelted together the bones of all his  
folk.

He fled unguided at first; but hearing the breakers roar,  
Thitherward shaped his way, and came at length to  
the shore.

Sound-limbed he was: dry-eyed; but smarted in every  
part;

And the mighty cage of his ribs heaved on his straining  
heart

With sorrow and rage. And "Fools!" he cried, "fools  
of Vaiau,

Heads of swine—gluttons—Alas! and where are they  
now?

Those that I played with, those that nursed me, those  
that I nursed?

God, and I outliving them! I, the least and the  
worst—

I, that thought myself crafty, snared by this herd of  
swine,

In the tortures of hell and desolate, stripped of all  
that was mine:

All!—my friends and my fathers—the silver heads of  
yore

That trooped to the council, the children that ran to  
the open door

Crying with innocent voices and clasping a father's  
knees!

And mine, my wife—my daughter—my sturdy climber  
of trees

Ah, never to climb again !”

Thus in the dusk of the night,  
(For clouds rolled in the sky and the moon was  
swallowed from sight,)

Pacing and gnawing his fists, Rahéro raged by the  
shore.

Vengeance: that must be his. But much was to do  
before ;

And first a single life to be snatched from a deadly  
place,

A life, the root of revenge, surviving plant of the race :  
And next the race to be raised anew, and the lands of  
the clan

Repeopled. So Rahéro designed, a prudent man  
Even in wrath, and turned for the means of revenge  
and escape :

A boat to be seized by stealth, a wife to be taken by  
rape.

Still was the dark lagoon ; beyond, on the coral wall,  
He saw the breakers shine, he heard them bellow and  
fall.

Alone, on the top of the reef, a man with a flaming  
brand

Walked, gazing and pausing, a fish-spear poised in  
his hand.

The foam boiled to his calf when the mightier breakers  
came,

And the torch shed in the wind scattering tufts of  
flame.

Afar on the dark lagoon a canoe lay idly at wait .

A figure dimly guiding it: surely the fisherman's  
mate.

Rahéro saw and he smiled. He straightened his  
mighty thews:

Naked, with never a weapon, and covered with scorch  
and bruise,

He straightened his arms, he filled the void of his  
body with breath,

And, strong as the wind in his manhood, doomed the  
fisher to death.

Silent he entered the water, and silently swam, and  
came

There where the fisher walked, holding on high the  
flame.

Loud on the pier of the reef volleyed the breach of the  
sea,

And hard at the back of the man, Rahéro crept to his  
knee

On the coral, and suddenly sprang and seized him, the  
elder hand

Clutching the joint of his throat, the other snatching  
the brand

Ere it had time to fall, and holding it steady and  
high.

Strong was the fisher, brave, swift of mind and of  
eye—

Strongly he threw in the clutch; but Rahéro resisted  
the strain,

And jerked, and the spine of life snapped with a crack  
in twain,

And the man came slack in his hands and tumbled a  
lump at his feet.

One moment : and there, on the reef, where the breakers whitened and beat,  
Rahéro was standing alone, glowing and scorched and bare,

A victor unknown of any, raising the torch in the air.  
But once he drank of his breath, and instantly set him to fish

Like a man intent upon supper at home and a savoury dish.

For what should the woman have seen ? A man with a torch—and then

A moment's blur of the eyes—and a man with a torch again.

And the torch had scarcely been shaken. " Ah, surely," Rahéro said,

" She will deem it a trick of the eyes, a fancy born in the head ;

But time must be given the fool to nourish a fool's belief."

So for a while, a sedulous fisher, he walked the reef.  
Pausing at times and gazing, striking at times with the spear :

—Lastly, uttered the call ; and even as the boat drew near,

Like a man that was done with its use, tossed the torch in the sea.

Lightly he leaped on the boat beside the woman ; and she

Lightly addressed him, and yielded the paddle and place to sit ;

For now the torch, was extinguished the night was black as the pit.



Rahéro set him to row, never a word he spoke,  
And the boat sang in the water urged by his vigorous  
stroke.

—"What ails you?" the woman asked, "and why did  
you drop the brand?"

We have only to kindle another as soon as we come to  
land."

Never a word Rahéro replied, but urged the canoe.  
And a chill fell on the woman.—"Atta! speak! is it  
you?"

Speak! Why are you silent? Why do you bend  
aside?

Wherefore steer to the seaward?" thus she panted and  
cried.

Never a word from the oarsman, toiling there in the  
dark;

But right for a gate of the reef he silently headed the  
bark,

And wielding the single paddle with passionate sweep  
on sweep,

Drove her, the little fitted, forth on the open deep.

And fear, there where she sat, froze the woman to  
stone:

Not fear of the crazy boat and the weltering deep  
alone;

But a keener fear of the night, the dark, and the  
ghostly hour,

And the thing that drove the canoe with more than  
a mortal's power

And more than a mortal's boldness. For much she  
knew of the dead

That haunt and fish upon reefs, trailing, like men, for  
bread,

And traffic with human fishers, or slay them and take  
their ware,  
Till the hour when the star of the dead<sup>15</sup> goes down,  
and the morning air  
Blows, and the cocks are singing on shore. And  
surely she knew  
The speechless thing at her side belonged to the  
grave.<sup>16</sup>

It blew  
All night from the south ; all night, Rahéro contended  
and kept  
The prow to the cresting sea ; and, silent as though  
she slept,  
The woman huddled and quaked. And now was the  
peep of day.  
High and long on their left the mountainous island  
lay ;  
And over the peaks of Taiárapu arrows of sunlight  
struck.  
On shore the birds were beginning to sing : the  
ghostly ruck  
Of the buried had long ago returned to the covered  
grave ;  
And here on the sea, the woman, waxing suddenly  
brave,  
Turned her swiftly about and looked in the face of the  
man.  
And sure he was none that she knew, none of her  
country or clan :  
A stranger, mother-naked, and marred with the marks  
of fire,  
But comely and great of stature, a man to obey and  
admire.

And Rahéro regarded her also, fixed, with a frowning  
face,  
Judging the woman's fitness to mother a warlike race.  
Broad of shoulder, ample of girdle, long in the thigh,  
Deep of bosom she was, and bravely supported his  
eye.

"Woman," said he, "last night the men of your  
folk—  
Man, woman, and maid, smothered my race in smoke.  
It was done like cowards; and I, a mighty man of my  
hands,  
Escaped, a single life; and now to the empty lands  
And smokeless hearths of my people, sail, with your-  
self, alone.  
Before your mother was born, the die of to-day was  
thrown  
And you selected:—your husband, vainly striving, to  
fall  
Broken between these hands:—yourself to be severed  
from all,  
The places, the people, you love—home, kindred, and  
clan—  
And to dwell in a desert and bear the babes of a kin-  
less man."

#### NOTES TO THE SONG OF RAHÉRO

INTRODUCTION.—This tale, of which I have not consciously changed a single feature, I received from tradition. It is highly popular through all the country of the eight Tevas, the clan to which Rahéro belonged; and particularly in Taiárapu, the windward peninsula of Tahiti, where he lived. I have heard from end to end two versions; and as many as five different persons have

helped me with details. There seems no reason why the tale should not be true.

Note 1, page 84. "*The aito*," quasi champion, or brave. One skilled in the use of some weapon, who wandered the country challenging distinguished rivals and taking part in local quarrels. It was in the natural course of his advancement to be at last employed by a chief, or king; and it would then be a part of his duties to purvey the victim for sacrifice. One of the doomed families was indicated; the aito took his weapon and went forth alone; a little behind him bearers followed with the sacrificial basket. Sometimes the victim showed fight, sometimes prevailed; more often, without doubt, he fell. But whatever body was found, the bearers indifferently took up.

Note 2, page 86. "*Pai*," "*Honoura*," and "*Ahupu*." Legendary persons of Tahiti, all natives of Taiárapu. Of the first two, I have collected singular although imperfect legends, which I hope soon to lay before the public in another place. Of Ahupu, except in snatches of song, little memory appears to linger. She dwelt at least about Tepari—"the sea-cliffs,"—the eastern fastness of the isle; walked by paths known only to herself upon the mountains; was courted by dangerous suitors who came swimming from adjacent islands, and defended and rescued (as I gather) by the loyalty of native fish. My anxiety to learn more of "*Ahupu Vehine*" became (during my stay in Taiárapu) a cause of some diversion to that mirthful people, the inhabitants.

Note 3, page 87. "*Covered an oven*." The cooking fire is made in a hole in the ground, and is then buried.

Note 4, page 88. "*Flies*." This is perhaps an anachronism. Even speaking of to-day in Tahiti, the phrase would have to be understood as referring mainly to mosquitoes, and these only in watered valleys with close woods, such as I suppose to form the surroundings of Rahéro's homestead. A quarter of a mile away, where the air moves freely, you shall look in vain for one.

Note 5, page 90. "*Hook*" of mother-of-pearl. Bright-hook fishing, and that with the spear, appear to be the favourite native methods.

Note 6, page 91. "*Leaves*," the plates of Tahiti.

Note 7, page 91. "*Yottowas*," so spelt for convenience of pronunciation, quasi Tacksmen in the Scottish Highlands. The

organization of eight subdistricts and eight yottowas to a division, which was in use (until yesterday) among the Tevas. I have attributed without authority to the next clan (see page 33).

Note 8, page 92. "*Omare*," pronounce as a dactyl. A loaded quarter-staff, one of the two favourite weapons of the Tahitian brave; the javelin, or casting spear, was the other.

Note 9, page 95. "*The ribbon of light*." Still to be seen (and heard) spinning from one marae to another on Tahiti; or so I have it upon evidence that would rejoice the Psychical Society.

Note 10, page 96. "*Námunu-úra*." The complete name is Namunu-ura te aropa. Why it should be pronounced Námunu, dactyllically, I cannot see, but so I have always heard it. This was the clan immediately beyond the Tevas on the south coast of the island. At the date of the tale the clan organization must have been very weak. There is no particular mention of Támatéa's mother going to Papara, to the head chief of her own clan, which would appear her natural recourse. On the other hand, she seems to have visited various lesser chiefs among the Tevas, and these to have excused themselves solely on the danger of the enterprise. The broad distinction here drawn between Nateva and Námunu-úra is therefore not impossibly anachronistic.

Note 11, page 96. "*Hiopa the king*." Hiopa was really the name of the king (chief) of Vaiau: but I could never learn that of the king of Paea—pronounce to rhyme with the Indian *ayah*—and I gave the name where it was most needed. This note must appear otiose indeed to readers who have never heard of either of these two gentlemen; and perhaps there is only one person in the world capable at once of reading my verses and spying the inaccuracy. For him, for Mr. Tati Salmon, hereditary high chief of the Tevas, the note is solely written: a small attention from a clansman to his chief.

Note 12, page 97. "*Let the pigs be tapu*." It is impossible to explain *tapu* in a note; we have it as an English word, taboo. Suffice it, that a thing which was *tapu* must not be touched, nor a place that was *tapu* visited.

Note 13, page 104. "*Fish, the food of desire*." There is a special word in the Tahitian language to signify *hungering after fish*. I may remark that here is one of my chief difficulties

about the whole story. How did king, commons, women, and all come to eat together at this feast? But it troubled none of my numerous authorities: so there must certainly be some natural explanation.

Note 14, page 108. "*The mustering word of the clan.*"

*Teva te ua,  
Teva te matai!*

Teva the wind,  
Teva the rain!

Notes 15 and 16, page 115. "*The star of the dead.*" Venus as a morning star. I have collected much curious evidence as to this belief. The dead retain their taste for a fish diet, enter into copartnery with living fishers, and haunt the reef and the lagoon. The conclusion attributed to the nameless lady of the legend would be reached to-day, under the like circumstances, by ninety per cent of Polynesians: and here I probably understate by one-tenth.

# THE FEAST OF FAMINE

## MARQUESAN MANNERS

### I. THE PRIEST'S VIGIL

IN all the land of the tribe was neither fish nor fruit,  
And the deepest pit of popoi stood empty to the foot.<sup>1</sup>  
The clans upon the left and the clans upon the right  
Now oiled their carven maces and scoured their  
daggers bright ;  
They gat them to the thicket, to the deepest of the  
shade,  
And lay with sleepless eyes in the deadly ambuscade.  
And oft in the starry even the song of morning rose,  
What time the oven smoked in the country of their  
foes ;  
For oft to loving hearts, and waiting ears and sight,  
The lads that went to forage returned not with the  
night.  
Now first the children sickened, and then the women  
paled,  
And the great arms of the warrior no more for war  
availed.  
Hushed was the deep drum, discarded was the dance ;  
And those that met the priest now glanced at him  
askance.

The priest was a man of years, his eyes were ruby-red,<sup>3</sup>  
He neither feared the dark nor the terrors of the dead;  
He knew the songs of races, the names of ancient  
date;  
And the beard upon his bosom would have bought  
the chief's estate.  
He dwelt in a high-built lodge, hard by the roaring  
shore,  
Raised on a noble terrace and with tikis<sup>3</sup> at the door.  
Within it was full of riches, for he served his nation  
well,  
And full of the sound of breakers, like the hollow of  
a shell.  
For weeks he let them perish, gave never a helping  
sign,  
But sat on his oiled platform to commune with the  
divine,  
But sat on his high terrace, with the tikis by his side,  
And stared on the blue ocean, like a parrot, ruby-  
eyed.  
Dawn as yellow as sulphur leaped on the mountain  
height:  
Out on the round of the sea the gems of the morning  
light,  
Up from the round of the sea the streamers of the  
sun;—  
But down in the depths of the valley the day was not  
begun.  
In the blue of the woody twilight burned red the  
cocoa-husk,  
And the women and men of the clan went forth to  
bathe in the dusk,  
A word that began to go round, a word, a whisper, a  
start:



Hope that leaped in the bosom, fear that knocked on the heart :

“ See, the priest is not risen—look, for his door is fast !  
He is going to name the victims ; he is going to help us at last.”

Thrice rose the sun to noon ; and ever, like one of the dead,

The priest lay still in his house with the roar of the sea in his head ;

There was never a foot on the floor, there was never a whisper of speech ;

Only the leering tikis stared on the blinding beach.

Again were the mountains fired, again the morning broke ;

And all the houses lay still, but the house of the priest awoke.

Close in their covering roofs lay and trembled the clan,  
But the agèd, red-eyed priest ran forth like a lunatic man ;

And the village panted to see him in the jewels of death again,

In the silver beards of the old and the hair of women slain.

Frenzy shook in his limbs, frenzy shone in his eyes,  
And still and again as he ran, the valley rang with his cries.

All day long in the land, by cliff and thicket and den,  
He ran his lunatic rounds, and howled for the flesh of men ;

All day long he ate not, nor ever drank of the brook ;  
And all day long in their houses the people listened and shook—

All day long in their houses they listened with bated  
breath,  
And never a soul went forth, for the sight of the  
priest was death.

Three were the days of his running, as the gods ap-  
pointed of yore,  
Two the nights of his sleeping alone in the place of  
gore :  
The drunken slumber of frenzy twice he drank to the  
lees,  
On the sacred stones of the High-place under the  
sacred trees ;  
With a lamp at his ashen head he lay in the place of  
the feast,  
And the sacred leaves of the banyan rustled around  
the priest.  
Last, when the stated even fell upon terrace and tree,  
And the shade of the lofty island lay leagues away to  
sea,  
And all the valleys of verdure were heavy with manna  
and musk,  
The wreck of the red-eyed priest came gasping home  
in the dusk;  
He reeled across the village, he staggered along the  
shore,  
And between the leering tikis crept groping through  
his door.

There went a stir through the lodges, the voice of  
speech awoke ;  
Once more from the builded platforms arose the  
evening smoke.

And those who were mighty in war, and those renowned for an art  
Sat in their stated seats and talked of the morrow apart.

## II. THE LOVERS

HARK! away <sup>to</sup> in the woods—for the ears of love are sharp—  
Stealthily, quietly touched, the note of the one-stringed harp.<sup>4</sup>

In the lighted house of her father, why should Taheia start?

Taheia heavy of hair, Taheia tender of heart,  
Taheia the well-descended, a bountiful dealer in love,  
Nimble of foot like a deer, and kind of eye like the dove?  
Sly and shy as a cat, with never a change of face,  
Taheia slips to the door, like one that would breathe a space;

Saunters and pauses, and looks at the stars, and lists to the seas;

Then sudden and swift as a cat, she plunges under the trees.

Swift as a cat she runs, with her garment gathered high,

Leaping, nimble of foot, running, certain of eye;  
And ever to guide her way over the smooth and the sharp,

Ever nearer and nearer the note of the one-stringed harp;

Till at length, in a glade of the wood, with a naked mountain above,

The sound of the heart thrown down, and she in the arms of her love.

"Rua,"—"Taheia," they cry—"my heart, my soul, and my eyes,"

And clasp and sunder and kiss, with lovely laughter and sighs,

"Rua!"—"Taheia, my love,"—"Rua, star of my night, Clasp me, hold me, and love me, single spring<sup>1</sup> of delight."

And Rua folded her close, he folded her near and long,  
The living knit to the living, and sang the lover's song :

*Night, night it is, night upon the palms.*

*Night, night it is, the land wind has blown.*

*Starry, starry night, over deep and height ;*

*Love, love in the valley, love all alone.*

"Taheia, heavy of hair, a foolish thing have we done,  
To bind what gods have sundered unkindly into one.  
Why should a lowly lover have touched Taheia's skirt,  
Taheia the well-descended, and Rua child of the dirt?"

"—On high with the haka-ikis my father sits in state,  
Ten times fifty kinsmen salute him in the gate ;  
Round all his martial body, and in bands across his face,

The marks of the tattooer proclaim his lofty place.  
I too, in the hands of the cunning, in the sacred cabin of palm,<sup>5</sup>

Have shrunk like the mimosa, and bleated like the lamb ;

Round half my tender body, that none shall clasp but you :

For a crest and a fair adornment go dainty lines of blue.

Love, love, beloved Rua, love levels all degrees,  
And the well-tattooed Taheia clings panting to your  
knees."

"—Taheia, song of the morning, how long is the  
longest love?

A cry, a clasp of the hands, a star that falls from above!  
Ever at morn in the blue, and at night when all is black,  
Ever it skulks and trembles with the hunter, Death, on  
its track.

Hear me, Taheia, death! For to-morrow the priest  
shall awake,

And the names be named of the victims to bleed for  
the nation's sake;

And first of the numbered many that shall be slain  
ere noon,

Rua the child of the dirt, Rua the kinless loon.

For him shall the drum be beat, for him be raised the  
song,

For him to the sacred High-place the chaunting  
people throng,

For him the oven smoke as for a speechless beast,  
And the sire of my Taheia come greedy to the feast."

"Rua, be silent, spare me. Taheia closes her ears.

Pity my yearning heart, pity my girlish years!

Flee from the cruel hands, flee from the knife and coal,  
Lie hid in the deeps of the woods, Rua, sire of my  
soul!"

"Whither to flee, Taheia, whither in all of the land?

The fires of the bloody kitchen are kindled on every  
hand;

On every hand in the isle a hungry whetting of teeth,

Eyes in the trees above, arms in the brush beneath.  
Patience to lie in wait, cunning to follow the sleuth,  
Abroad the foes I have fought, and at home the friends  
of my youth."

" Love, love, beloved Rua, love has a clearer eye,  
Hence from the arms of love you go not forth to die.  
There, where the broken mountain drops sheer into  
the glen,  
There shall you find a hold from the boldest hunter  
of men ;  
There, in the deep recess, where the sun falls only at  
noon,  
And only once in the night enters the light of the moon,  
Nor ever a sound but of birds, or the rain when it falls  
with a shout ;  
For death and the fear of death beleaguer the valley  
about.  
Tapu it is, but the gods will surely pardon despair ;  
Tapu, but what of that ? \* If Rua can only dare.  
Tapu and tapu and tapu, I know they are every one  
right ;  
But the god of every tapu is not always quick to smite.  
Lie secret, there, my Rua, in the arms of awful gods,  
Sleep in the shade of the trees on the couch of the  
kindly sods,  
Sleep and dream of Taheia, Taheia will wake for you ;  
And whenever the land wind blows and the woods are  
heavy with dew,  
Alone through the horror of night, † with food for the  
soul of her love,  
Taheia the undissuaded will hurry true as the dove."

"Taheia, the pit of the night crawls with treacherous things,  
Spirits of ultimate air and the evil souls of things;  
The souls of the dead, the stranglers, that perch in  
the trees of the wood,  
Waiters for all things human, haters of evil and good."

"Rua, behold me, kiss me, look in my eyes and read;  
Are these the eyes of a maid that would leave her  
lover in need?  
Brave in the eye of day, my father ruled in the fight;  
The child of his loins, Taheia, will play the man in  
the night."

So it was spoken, and so agreed, and Taheia arose  
And smiled in the stars and was gone, swift as the  
swallow goes;  
And Rua stood on the hill, and sighed, and followed  
her flight,  
And there were the lodges below, each with its door  
alight;  
From folk that sat on the terrace and drew out the  
even long  
Sudden crowings of laughter, monotonous drone of  
song;  
The quiet passage of souls over his head in the trees;  
And from all around the haven the crumbling thunder  
of seas.  
"Farewell, my home," said Rua. "Farewell, O quiet  
seat!  
To-morrow in all your valleys the drum of death shall  
beat."

## III. THE FEAST

DAWN as yellow as sulphur leaped on the naked peak,  
And all the village was stirring, for now was the  
priest to speak.

Forth on his terrace he came, and sat with the chief  
in talk ;

His lips were blackened with fever, his cheeks were  
whiter than chalk ;

Fever clutched at his hands, fever nodded his head,  
But, quiet and steady and cruel, his eyes shone ruby-  
red.

In the earliest rays of the sun the chief rose up content ;  
Braves were summoned, and drummers ; messengers  
came and went ;

Braves ran to their lodges, weapons were snatched  
from the wall ;

The commons herded together, and fear was over  
them all.

Festival dresses they wore, but the tongue was dry  
in their mouth,

And the blinking eyes in their faces skirted from north  
to south.

Now to the sacred enclosure gathered the greatest and  
least,

And from under the shade of the banyan arose the  
voice of the feast,

The frenzied roll of the drum, and a swift, monotonous  
song.

Higher the sun swam up ; the trade wind level and  
strong



Awoke in the tops of the palms and rattled the fans .  
aloud,  
And over the garlanded heads and shining robes of  
the crowd  
Tossed the spiders of shadow, scattered the jewels of  
sun.  
Forty the tale of the drums, and the forty throbbed  
like one ;  
A thousand hearts in the crowd, and the even chorus  
of song,  
Swift as the feet of a runner, trampled a thousand  
strong.  
And the old men lacerated at the ovens and licked their  
lips for the food ;  
And the women stared at the lads, and laughed and  
looked to the wood.  
As when the sweltering baker, at night, when the city  
is dead,  
Alone in the trough of labour treads and fashions the  
bread ;  
So in the heat, and the reek, and the touch of woman  
and man,  
The naked spirit of evil kneaded the hearts of the clan.

Now cold was at many a heart, and shaking in many  
a seat ;  
For there were the empty baskets, but who was to  
furnish the meat ?  
For here was the nation assembled, and there were  
the ovens aigh,  
And out of a thousand singers nine were numbered to  
die.

Till, of a sudden, a shock, a mace in the air, a yell,  
And, struck in the edge of the crowd, the first of the  
victims fell.<sup>8</sup>

Terror and horrible glee divided the shrinking clan,  
Terror of what was to follow, glee for a diet of man.  
Frenzy hurried the chaunt, frenzy rattled the drums;  
The nobles, high on the terrace, greedily mouthed  
their thumbs;

And once and again and again, in the ignorant crowd  
below,

Once and again and again descended the murderous  
blow.

Now smoked the oven, and now, with the cutting lip  
of a shell,

A butcher of ninety winters jointed the bodies well.

Unto the carven lodge, silent, in order due,

The grandees of the nation one after one withdrew;

And a line of laden bearers brought to the terrace foot,  
On poles across their shoulders, the last reserve of  
fruit.

The victims bled for the nobles in the old appointed  
way;

The fruit was spread for the commons, for all should  
eat to-day.

And now was the kava brewed, and now the cocoa ran,  
Now was the hour of the dance for child and woman  
and man;

And mirth was in every heart, and a garland on every  
head,

And all was well with the living and well with the  
eight who were dead.

Only the chiefs and the priest talked and consulted  
awhile:

"To-morrow," they said, and "To-morrow," and  
nodded and seemed to smile :

"Rua the child of dirt, the creature of common clay,  
Rua must die to-morrow, since Rua is gone to-day."

Out of the groves of the valley, where clear the black-  
birds sang,

Sheer from the trees of the valley the face of the  
mountain sprang ;

Sheer and bare it rose, unscalable barricade,  
Beaten and 'blown against by the generous draught  
of the trade.

Dawn on its fluted brow painted rainbow light,  
Close on its pinnacled crown trembled the stars at  
night.

Here and there in a cleft clustered contorted trees,  
Or the silver beard 'of a stream hung and swung in  
the breeze.

High overhead, with a cry, the torrents leaped for the  
main,

And silently sprinkled below 'in thin perennial rain.  
Dark in the staring noon, dark was Rua's ravine,  
Damp and cold was the air, and the face of the cliffs  
was green.

Here, in the rocky pit, accursed already of old,  
On a stone in the midst of a river, Rua sat and was  
cold.

"Valley of mid-day shadows, valley of silent falls,"  
Rua sang, and his voice went hollow about the walls,  
"Valley of shadow and rock, a doleful prison to me,  
What is the life you can give to a child of the sun  
and the sea ?"

And Rua arose and came to the open mouth of the  
glen,  
Whence he beheld the woods, and the sea, and houses  
of men.  
Wide blew the riotous trade, and smelt in his nostrils  
good ;  
It bowed the boats on the bay, and tore and divided  
the wood ;  
It smote and sundered the groves as Moses smote  
with the rod,  
And the streamers of all the trees blew like banners  
abroad ;  
And ever and on, in a lull, the trade wind brought  
him along  
A far-off patter of drums and a far-off whisper of song.

Swift as the swallow's wings, the diligent hands on  
the drum  
Fluttered and hurried and throbbed. "Ah, woe that  
I hear you come,"  
Rua cried in his grief, "a sorrowful sound to me,  
Mounting far and faint from the resonant shore of the  
sea !  
Woe in the song ! for the grave breathes in the  
singers' breath,  
And I hear in the tramp of the drums the beat of the  
heart of death.  
Home of my youth ! no more, through all the length  
of the years,  
No more to the place of the echoes of early laughter  
and tears,

No more shall Rua return ; no more as the evening  
ends,  
To crowded eyes of welcome, to the reaching hands  
of friends."

All day long from the High-place the drums and the  
singing came,  
And the even fell, and the sun went down, a wheel of  
flame ;  
And night came gleaming the shadows and hushing  
the sounds of the wood ;  
And silence slept on all, where Rua sorrowed and  
stood.  
But still from the shore of the bay the sound of the  
festival rang,  
And still the crowd, in the High-place danced and  
shouted and sang.

Now over all the isle terror was breathed abroad  
Of shadowy hands from the trees and shadowy snares  
in the sod ;  
And before the nostrils of night, the shuddering hunter  
of men  
Hurried, with beard on shoulder, back to his lighted  
den.  
"Taheia, here to my side !"—"Rua, my Rua, you !"  
And cold from the clutch of terror, cold with the damp  
of the dew,  
Taheia, heavy of hair, leaped through the dark to his  
arms ;  
Taheia leaped to his clasp, and was folded in from  
alarms.

"Rua beloved, here, see what your love has brought;  
Coming—alas! returning—swift as the shuttle of  
thought;

Returning, alas! for to-night, with the beaten drum  
and the voice,

In the shine of many torches must the sleepless clan  
rejoice;

And Taheia the well-descended, the daughter of chief  
and priest,

Taheia must sit in her place in the crowded bench of  
the feast."

So it was spoken; and she, girding her garment high,  
Fled and was swallowed of woods, swift as the sight  
of an eye.

Night over isle and sea rolled her curtain of stars,  
Then a trouble awoke in the air, the east was banded  
with bars;

Dawn as yellow as sulphur leaped on the mountain  
height;

Dawn, in the deepest glen, fell a wonder of light;  
High and clear stood the palms in the eye of the  
brightening east,

And lo! from the sides of the sea the broken sound of  
the feast!

As, when in days of summer, through open windows,  
the fly

Swift as a breeze and loud as a trump goes by,  
But when frosts in the field have pinched the winter-  
ing mouse,

Blindly noses and buzzes and hums in the firelit house:  
So the sound of the feast gallantly trampled at night,  
So it staggered and drooped, and droned in the morn-  
ing light.

## IV. THE RAID

It chanced that as Rua sat in the valley of silent falls,  
He heard a calling of doves from high on the cliffy  
walls.

Fire had fashioned of yore, and time had broken, the  
rocks ;

There were rooting crannies for trees and nesting-  
places for flocks ;

And he saw on the top of the cliffs, looking up from  
the pit of the shade,

A flicker of wings and sunshine, and trees that swung  
in the trade.

"The trees swing in the trade," quoth Rua, doubtful  
of words,

"And the sun stares from the sky, but what should  
trouble the birds ?"

Up from the shade he gazed, where high the parapet  
shone,

And he was aware of a ledge and of things that moved  
thereon.

"What manner of things are these ? Are they spirits  
abroad by day ?

Or the foes of my clan that are come, bringing death  
by a perilous way ?"

The valley was gouged like a vessel, and round like  
the vessel's lip,

With a cape of the side of the hill thrust forth like the  
bows of a ship.

On the top of the face of the cape a volley of sun  
struck fair,

And the cape overhung like a chin a gulph of sunless air.

"Silence, heart! What is that?—that, that flickered and shone,

Into the sun for an instant, and in an instant gone?

Was it a warrior's plume, a warrior's girdle of hair?

Swung in the loop of a rope, is he making a bridge of the air?"

Once and again Rua saw, in the trenchant edge of the sky,

The giddy conjuring done. And then, in the blink of an eye,

A scream caught in with the breath, a whirling packet of limbs,

A lump that dived in the gulph, more swift than a dolphin swims;

And there was the lump at his feet, and eyes were alive in the lump.

Sick was the soul of Rua, ambushed close in a clump;

Sick of soul he drew near, making his courage stout;

And he looked in the face of the thing, and the life of the thing went out.

And he gazed on the tattooed limbs, and, behold, he knew the man:

Hoka, a chief of the Vais, the truculent foe of his clan:

Hoka a moment since that stepped in the loop of the rope,

Filled with the lust of war, and alive with courage and hope.

Again to the giddy cornice Rua lifted his eyes,

And again beheld men passing in the armpit of the skies



"Foes of my race!" cried Rua, "the mouth of Rua is,  
true:

Never a shark in the deep is nobler of soul than you.  
There was never a nobler foray, never a bolder plan;  
Never a dizzier path was trod by the children of man;  
And Rua, your evil-dealer through all the days of his  
years,

"Counts it honour to hate you, honour to fall by your  
spears."

And Rua straightened his back. "O Vais, a scheme  
for a scheme!"

Cried Rua and turned and descended the turbulent  
stair of the stream,

Leaping from rock to rock as the water-wagtail at  
home

Flits through resonant valleys and skims by boulder  
and foam.

And Rua burst from the glen and leaped on the shore  
of the brook,

And straight for the roofs of the clan his vigorous way  
he took.

Swift were the heels of his flight, and loud behind as  
he went

Rattled the leaping stones on the line of his long  
descent.

And ever he thought as he ran, and caught at his  
gasping breath,

"O the fool of a Rua, Rua that runs to his death!  
But the right is the right," thought Rua, and ran like  
the wind on the foam,

"The right is the right for ever, and home for ever  
home.

For what though the oven smoke? And what though  
I die ere morn?

There was I nourished and tended, and there was  
Taheia born."

Noon was high on the High-place, the second noon of  
the feast;

And heat and shameful slumber weighed on people  
and Priest;

And the heart drudged slow in bodies heavy with  
monstrous meals;

And the senseless limbs were scattered abroad like  
spokes of wheels;

And crapulous women sat and stared at the stones  
anigh

With a bestial droop of the lip and a swinish rheum  
in the eye.

As about the dome of the bees in the time for the  
drones to fall,

The dead and the maimed are scattered, and lie, and  
stagger, and crawl;

So on the grades of the terrace, in the ardent eye of  
the day,

The half-awake and the sleepers clustered and crawled  
and lay;

And loud as the dome of the bees, in the time of a  
swarming horde,

A horror of many insects hung in the air and roared.

Rua looked and wondered; he said to himself in his  
heart:

"Poor are the pleasures of life, and death is the better  
part."

But lo! on the higher benches a cluster of tranquil  
folk

Sat by themselves, nor raised their serious eyes, nor spoke :

Women with robes unruffled and garlands duly arranged,

Gazing far from the feast with faces of people estranged ;  
And quiet amongst the quiet, and fairer than all the fair,

Taheia, the well-descended, Taheia, heavy of hair.

And the soul of Rua awoke, courage enlightened his eyes,  
And he uttered a summoning shout and called on the clan to rise.

Over against him at once, in the spotted shade of the trees,

Owlsh and blinking creatures scrambled to hands and knees ;

On the grades of the sacred terrace, the driveller woke to fear,

And the hand of the ham-drooped warrior brandished a wavering spear.

And Rua folded his arms, and scorn discovered his teeth ;

Above the war-crowd gibbered, and Rua stood smiling beneath.

Thick, like leaves in the autumn, faint, like April sleet,  
Missiles from tremulous hands quivered around his feet ;

And Taheia leaped from her place ; and the priest, the ruby-eyed,

Ran to the front of the terrace, and brandished his arms and cried :

" Hold, O fools, he brings tidings !" and " Hold, 'tis the love of my heart !"

Till lo ! in front of the terrace, Rua pierced with a dart.

Taheia cherished his head, and the aged priest stood by,  
And gazed with eyes of ruby at Rua's darkening eye.

"Taheia, here is the end, I die a death for a man.  
I have given the life of my soul to save an unsavable  
clan.

See them, the drooping of hams! behold 'me the  
blinking crew :

Fifty spears they cast, and one of fifty true !  
And you, O priest, the foreteller, foretell for yourself  
if you can,

Foretell the hour of the day when the Vais shall burst  
on your clan !

By the head of the tapu cleft, with death and fire in  
their hand,

Thick and silent like ants, the warriors swarm in the  
land."

And they tell that when next the sun had climbed to  
the noonday skies,

It shone on the smoke of feasting in the country of  
the Vais.

#### NOTES TO THE FEAST OF FAMINE.

IN this ballad, I have strung together some of the more striking particularities of the Marquesas. It rests upon no authority; it is in no sense, like "*Rahéro*," a native story; but a patch-work of details of manners and the impressions of a traveller. It may seem strange, when the scene is laid upon these profligate islands, to make the story hinge on love. But love is not less known in the Marquesas than elsewhere; nor is there any cause of suicide more common in the islands.

Note 1, page 121. "*Pit of popoi*." Where the breadfruit was stored for preservation.

Note 2. page 121. "*Ruby-red*." The priest's eyes were prob-

ably red from the abuse of kava. His beard (*ib.*) is said to be worth an estate; for the beards of old men are the favourite head adornment of the Marquesans, as the hair of women formed their most costly girdle. The former, among this generally beardless and short-lived people, fetch to-day considerable sums.

Note 3, page 121. "*Tikis*." The tiki is an ugly image hewn out of wood or stone.

Note 4, page 124. "*The one-stringed harp*." Usually employed for serenades.

Note 5, page 125. "*The sacred cabin of palm*." Which, however, no woman could approach. I do not know where women were tattooed; probably in the common house, or in the bush, for a woman was a creature of small account. I must guard the reader against supposing Taheia was at all disfigured; the art of the Marquesan tattooer is extreme; and she would appear to be clothed in a web of lace, inimitably delicate, exquisite in pattern, and of a bluish hue that at once contrasts and harmonizes with the warm pigment of the native skin. It would be hard to find a woman more becomingly adorned than "a well-tattooed" Marquesan.

Note 6, page 127. "*The horror of night*." The Polynesian fear of ghosts and of the dark has been already referred to. Their life is beleaguered by the dead.

Note 7, page 128. "*The quiet passage of souls*." So, I am told, the natives explain the sound of a little wind passing overhead unfelt.

Note 8, page 131. "*The first of the victims fell*." Without doubt, this whole scene is untrue to fact. The victims were disposed of privately and some time before. And indeed I am far from claiming the credit of any high degree of accuracy for this ballad. Even in a time of famine, it is probable that Marquesan life went far more gaily than is here represented. But the melancholy of to-day lies on the writer's mind.

## TICONDEROGA

### A LEGEND OF THE WEST HIGHLANDS

THIS is the tale of the man  
Who heard a word in the night  
In the land of the heathery hills,  
In the days of the feud and the fight.  
By the sides of the rainy sea,  
Where never a stranger came,  
On the awful lips of the dead,  
He heard the outlandish name.  
It sang in his sleeping ears,  
It hummed in his waking head :  
The name—Ticonderoga,  
The utterance of the dead.

#### I. THE SAYING OF THE NAME

ON the loch-sides of Appin,  
When the mist blew from the sea,  
A Stewart stood with a Cameron :  
An angry man was he.  
The blood beat in his ears,  
The blood ran hot to his head,  
The mist blew from the sea,  
And there was the Cameron dead.

"O, what have I done to my friend,  
O, what have I done to myself',  
That he should be cold and dead,  
And I in the danger of all ?

Nothing but danger about me,  
Danger behind and before,  
Death at wait in the heather  
In Appin and Mamore,  
Hate at all of the ferries  
And death at each of the fords,  
Camerons priming gunlocks  
And Camerons sharpening swords."

But this was a man of counsel,  
This was a man of a score,  
There dwelt no pawkier Stewart  
In Appin or Mamore.  
He looked on the blowing mist,  
He looked on the awful dead,  
And there came a smile on his face  
And there slipped a thought in his head.

Out over cairn and moss,  
Out over scrog and scaur,  
He ran as runs the clansman  
That bears the cross of war.  
His heart beat in his body,  
His hair clove to his face,  
When he came at last in the gloaming  
To the dead man's brother's place.  
The east was white with the moon,  
The west with the sun was red,  
And there, in the house-doorway,  
Stood the brother of the dead.

"I have slain a man to my danger,  
I have slain a man to my death.

I put my soul in your hands,"

The panting Stewart saith.

"I lay it bare in your hands,

For I know your hands are leal ;

And be you my targe and bulwark

From the bullet and the steel."

Then up and spoke the Cameron,

And gave him his hand again :

"There shall never a man in Scotland

Set faith in me in vain ;

And whatever man you have slaughtered,

Of whatever name or line,

By my sword and yonder mountain,

I make your quarrel mine.<sup>1</sup>

I bid you in to my fireside,

I share with you house and hall ;

It stands upon my honour

To see you safe from all."

It fell in the time of midnight,

When the fox barked in the den

And the plaids were over the faces

In all the houses of men,

That as the living Cameron

Lay sleepless on his bed,

Out of the night and the other world,

Came in to him the dead.

"My blood is on the heather,

My bones are on the hill ;

There is joy in the home of ravens

That the young shall eat their fill.



My blood is poured in the dust,  
My soul is spilled in the air ;  
And the man that has undone me  
Sleeps in my brother's care."

" I'm wae for your death, my brother,  
But if all of my house were dead,  
I couldnae withdraw the plighted hand,  
Nor break the word once said."

" O, what shall I say to our father,  
In the place to which I fare ?  
O, what shall I say to our mother,  
Who greets to see me there ?  
And to all the kindly Camerons  
That have lived and died long-syne—  
Is this the word you send them,  
Fause-hearted brother mine ?"

" It's neither fear nor duty,  
It's neither quick nor dead  
Shall gar me withdraw the plighted hand,  
Or break the word once said."

Thrice in the time of midnight,  
When the fox barked in the den,  
And the plaids were over the faces  
In all the houses of men,  
Thrice as the living Cameron  
Lay sleepless on his bed,  
Out of the night and the other world  
Came in to him the dead,  
And cried to him for vengeance  
On the man that laid him low ;  
And thrice the living Cameron  
Told the dead Cameron, no

"Thrice have you seen me, brother,  
But now shall see me no more,  
Till you meet your angry fathers  
Upon the farther shore.  
Thrice have I spoken, and now,  
Before the cock be heard,  
I take my leave for ever  
With the naming of a word.  
It shall sing in your sleeping ears.  
It shall hum in your waking head,  
The name—Ticonderoga,  
And the warning of the dead."

Now when the right was over  
And the time of people's fears,  
The Cameron walked abroad,  
And the word was in his ears.  
"Many a name I know,  
But never a name like this;  
O, where shall I find a skilly man  
Shall tell me what it is?"  
With many a man he counselled  
Of high and low degree,  
With the herdsmen on the mountains  
And the fishers of the sea.  
And he came and went unweary,  
And read the books of yore,  
And the runes that were written of old  
On stones upon the moor.  
And many a name he was told,  
But never the name of his fears—  
Never, in east or west,  
The name that rang in his ears :

Names of men and of clans ;  
Names for the grass and the tree,  
For the smallest tarn in the mountains,  
The smallest reef in the sea :  
Names for the high and low,  
The names of the craig and the flat ;  
But in all the land of Scotland,  
Never a name like that.

## II. THE SEEKING OF THE NAME

AND now there was speech in the south,  
And a man of the south that was wise,  
A periwig'd lord of London,<sup>2</sup>  
Called on the clans to rise.  
And the riders rode, and the summons  
Came to the western shore,  
To the land of the sea and the heather,  
To Appin and Mamore.  
It called on all to gather  
From every scrog and scaur,  
That loved their fathers' tartan  
And the ancient game of war.  
And down the watery valley  
And up the windy hill,  
Once more, as in the olden,  
The pipes were sounding shrill.  
Again in highland sunshine  
The naked steel was bright ;  
And the lads, once more in tartan,  
Went forth again to fight.

"O, why should I dwell here  
 With a weird upon my life,  
 When the clansmen shout for battle  
 And the war-swords clash in strife?  
 I cannae joy at feast,  
 I cannae sleep in bed,  
 For the wonder of the word  
 And the warning of the dead.  
 It sings in my sleeping ears,  
 It hums in my waking head,  
 The name—Ticonderoga,  
 The utterance of the dead.  
 Then up, and with the fighting men  
 To march away from here,  
 Till the cry of the great war-pipe  
 Shall drown it in my ear!"

Where flew King George's ensign  
 The plaided soldiers went:  
 They drew the sword in Germany,  
 In Flanders pitched the tent.  
 The bells of foreign cities  
 Rang far across the plain:  
 They passed the happy Rhine,  
 They drank the rapid Main.  
 Through Asiatic jungles  
 The Tartans filed their way,  
 And the neighing of the war-pipes  
 Struck terror in Cathay.<sup>3</sup>  
 "Many a name have I heard," he thought,  
 "In all the tongues of men,  
 Full many a name both here and there,  
 Full many both now and then.

When I was at home in my father's house  
In the land of the naked knee,  
Between the eagles that fly in the lift  
And the herrings that swim in the sea,  
And now that I am a captain-man  
With a braw cockade in my hat—  
Many a name have I heard,' he thought,  
"But never a name like that."

### III. THE PLACE OF THE NAME

THERE fell a war in a woody place,  
Lay far across the sea,  
A war of the march in the mirk midnight  
And the shot from behind the tree,  
The shaven head and the painted face,  
The silent foot in the wood,  
In a land of a strange, outlandish tongue  
That was hard to be understood.

It fell about the gloaming  
The general stood with his staff,  
He stood and he looked east and west  
With little mind to laugh.  
"Far have I been and much have I seen,  
And kent both gain and loss,  
But here we have woods on every hand  
And a kittle water to cross.  
Far have I been and much have I seen,  
But never the beat of this ;  
And there's one must go down to that waterside  
To see how deep it is."

It fell in the dusk of the night  
 When unco things betide,  
 The skilly captain, the Cameron,  
 Went down to that waterside.  
 Canny and soft the captain went ;  
 And a man of the woody land,  
 With the shaven head and the painted face,  
 Went down at his right hand.  
 It fell in the quiet night,  
 There was never a sound to ken ;  
 But all of the woods to the right and the left  
 Lay filled with the painted men.

" Far have I been and much have I seen,  
 Both as a man and boy,  
 But never have I set forth a foot  
 On so perilous an employ."  
 It fell in the dusk of the night  
 When unco things betide,  
 That he was aware of a captain-man  
 Drew near to the waterside.  
 He was aware of his coming  
 Down in the gloaming alone ;  
 And he looked in the face of the man  
 And lo ! the face was his own.  
 " This is my weird," he said,  
 " And now I ken the worst ;  
 For many shall fall the morn,  
 But I shall fall with the first.  
 O, you of the outland tongue,  
 You of the painted face,  
 This is the place of my death ;  
 Can you tell me the name of the place ?"

"Since the Frenchmen have been here  
 They have called it Sault-Marie;  
 But that is a name for priests,  
 And not for you and me.  
 It went by another word,"  
 Quoth he of the shaven head:  
 "It was called Ticonderoga  
 In the days of the great dead."

And it fell on the morrow's morning,  
 In the fiercest of the fight,  
 That the Cameron bit the dust  
 As he foretold at night;  
 And far from the hills of heather  
 Far from the isles of the sea,  
 He sleeps in the place of the name  
 As it was doomed to be.

#### NOTES TO TICONDEROGA

INTRODUCTION.—I first heard this legend of my own country from that friend of men of letters, Mr. Alfred Nutt, "there in roaring London's central stream," and since the ballad first saw the light of day in *Scribner's Magazine*, Mr. Nutt and Lord Archibald Campbell have been in public controversy on the facts. Two clans, the Camerons and the Campbells, lay claim to this bracing story; and they do well: the man who preferred his plighted troth to the commands and menaces of the dead is an ancestor worth disputing. But the Campbells must rest content: they have the broad lands and the broad page of history; this appanage must be denied them; for between the name of *Cameron* and that of *Campbell* the muse will never hesitate.

Note 1, page 145. Mr. Nutt reminds me, it was "by my sword and Ben Cruachan" the Cameron swore.

Note 2, page 148. "*A periwig'd lord of London.*" The first Pitt.

Note 3, page 149. "*Cathay.*" There must be some omission in General Stewart's charming *History of the Highland Regiments*, a book that might well be republished and continued; or it scarce appears how our friend could have got to China.

## HEATHER ALE

### A GALLOWAY LEGEND

FROM the bonny bells of heather  
They brewed a drink long-syne,  
Was sweeter far than honey,  
Was stronger far than wine.  
They brewed it and they drank it,  
And lay in a blessed swoond  
For days and days together  
In their dwellings underground.

There rose a king in Scotland,  
A fell man to his foes,  
He smote the Picts in battle,  
He hunted them like roes.  
Over miles of the red mountain  
He hunted as they fled,  
And strewed the dwarfish bodies  
Of the dying and the dead.

Summer came in the country,  
Red was the heather bell;  
But the manner of the brewing  
Was none alive to tell.



In graves that were like children's  
On many a mountain head,  
The Brewsters of the Heather  
Lay numbered with the dead.

The king in the red moorland  
Rode on a summer's day ;  
And the bees hummed, and the curlews  
Cried beside the way.  
The king rode, and was angry,  
Black was his brow and pale,  
To rule in a land of heather  
And lack the Heather Ale.

It fortune'd that his vassals,  
Riding free on the heath,  
Came on a stone that was fallen  
And vermin hid beneath.  
Rudely plucked from their hiding,  
Never a word they spoke :  
A son and his aged father—  
Last of the dwarfish folk.

The king sat high on his charger,  
He looked on the little men ;  
And the dwarfish and swarthy couple  
Looked at the king again.  
Down by the shore he had them ;  
And there on the giddy brink—  
" I will give you life, ye vermin,  
For the secret of the drink."

There stood the son and father  
And they looked high and low ;  
The heather was red around them,  
The sea rumbled below.

And up and spoke the father,  
Shrill was his voice to hear :

"I have a word in private,  
A word for the royal ear.

"Life is dear to the aged,  
And honour a little thing ;  
I would gladly sell the secret,"  
Quoth the Pict to the King.

His voice was small as a sparrow's,  
And shrill and wonderful clear :

"I would gladly sell my secret, •  
Only my son I fear.

"For life is a little matter,  
And death is nought to the young ;  
And I dare not sell my honour  
Under the eye of my son.  
Take *him*, O king, and bind him,  
And cast him far in the deep :  
And it's I will tell the secret  
That I have sworn to keep."

They took the son and bound him,  
Neck and heels in a thong,  
And a lad took him and swung him.  
And flung him far and strong,  
And the sea swallowed his body,  
Like that of a child of ten ;—  
And there on the cliff stood the father,  
Last of the dwarfish men.

"True was the word I told you :  
Only my son I feared ;  
For I doubt the sapling courage  
That goes without the beard.

But now in vain is the torture,  
Fire shall never avail :  
Here dies in my bosom  
The secret of Heather Ale."

## NOTE TO HEATHER ALE

AMONG the curiosities of human nature this legend claims a high place. It is needless to remind the reader that the Picts were never exterminated, and form to this day a large proportion of the folk of Scotland, occupying the eastern and the central parts, from the Firth of Forth, or perhaps the Lammermoors, upon the south, to the Ord of Caithness on the north. That the blundering guess of a dull chronicler should have inspired men with imaginary loathing for their own ancestors is already strange; that it should have begotten this wild legend seems incredible. Is it possible the chronicler's error was merely nominal? that what he told, and what the people proved themselves so ready to receive, about the Picts, was true or partly true of some anterior and perhaps Lappish savages, small of stature, black of hue, dwelling underground—possibly also the distillers of some forgotten spirit? See Mr. Campbell's *Tales of the West Highlands*.

## CHRISTMAS AT SEA

THE sheets were frozen hard, and they cut the naked  
hand ;  
The decks were like a slide, where a seaman scarce  
could stand ;  
The wind was a nor'wester, blowing squally off the sea ;  
And cliffs and spouting breakers were the only things  
a-lee.

They heard the surf a-roaring before the break of day ;  
But 'twas only with the peep of light we saw how ill  
we lay.  
We tumbled every hand on deck instanter, with a shout,  
And we gave her the maintops'l, and stood by to go  
about.

All day we tacked and tacked between the South  
Head and the North ;  
All day we hauled the frozen sheets, and got no further  
forth ;  
All day as cold as charity, in bitter pain and dread,  
For very life and nature we tacked from head to head.

We gave the South a wider berth, for there the tide-  
race roared ;  
But every tack we made we brought the North Head  
close aboard :  
So 's we saw the cliffs and houses, and the breakers  
running high,  
And the coastguard in his garden, with his glass  
against his eye.

The frost was on the village roofs as white as ocean  
foam ;  
The good red fires were burning bright in every 'long-  
shore home ;  
The windows sparkled clear, and the chimneys volleyed  
out ;  
And I vow we sniffed the victuals as the vessel went  
about.

The bells upon the church were rung with a mighty  
jovial cheer ;  
For it's just that I should tell you how (of all days in  
the year)  
This day of our adversity was blessed Christmas morn,  
And the house above the coastguard's was the house  
where I was born.

O well I saw the pleasant room, the pleasant faces  
there,  
My mother's silver spectacles, my father's silver hair ;  
And well I saw the firelight, like a flight of homely  
elves,  
Go dancing round the china-plates that stand upon  
the shelves.

And well I knew the talk they had, the talk that was  
of me,  
Of the shadow on the household and the son that went  
to sea ;  
And O the wicked fool I seemed, in every kind of way,  
To be here and hauling frozen ropes on blessèd Christ-  
mas Day.

They lit the high sea-light, and the dark began to fall.  
"All hands' to loose topgallant sails," I heard the  
captain call.  
"By the Lord, she'll never stand it," our first mate,  
Jackson, cried.  
. . . "It's the one way or the other, Mr. Jackson,"  
he replied.

She staggered to her bearings, but the sails were new  
and good,  
And the ship smelt up to windward just as though  
she understood.  
As the winter's day was ending, in the entry of the  
night,  
We cleared the weary headland, and passed below the  
light.

And they heaved a mighty breath, every soul on  
board but me,  
As they saw her nose again pointing handsome out to  
sea ;  
But all that I could think of, in the darkness and the  
cold,  
Was just that I was leaving home and my folks were  
growing old.



SONGS OF TRAVEL  
AND OTHER VERSES



NOTE TO THE FIRST EDITION.—*The following collection of verses, written at various times and places, principally after the author's final departure from England in 1887, was sent home by him for publication some months before his death. He had tried them in several different orders and under several different titles, as "Songs and Notes of Travel," "Posthumous Poems," etc., and in the end left their naming and arrangement to the present editor, with the suggestion that they should be added as Book III. to future editions of "Underwoods." This suggestion it is proposed to carry out; but in the meantime, for the benefit of those who possess "Underwoods" in its original form, it has been thought desirable to publish them separately in the present volume. They have already been included in the Edinburgh Edition of the author's works*

## • THE VAGABOND

(*To an air of Schubert*) •

GIVE to me the life I love,  
Let the lave go by me,  
Give the jolly heaven above  
And the byway nigh me.  
Bed in the bush with stars to see,  
Bread I dip in the river—  
There's the life for a man like me,  
There's the life for ever.

•  
Let the blow fall soon or late,  
Let what will be o'er me ;  
Give the face of earth around  
And the road before me.  
Wealth I seek not, hope nor love,  
Nor a friend to know me ;  
All I seek, the heaven above  
And the road below me.

Or let autumn fall on me  
Where afield I linger,  
Silencing the bird on tree,  
Biting the blue finger.

White as meal the frosty field—  
Warm the fireside haven—  
Not to autumn will I yield,  
Not to winter even !

Let the blow fall soon or late,  
Let what will be o'er me ;  
Give the face of earth around,  
And the road before me.  
Wealth I ask not, hope nor love,  
Nor a friend to know me ;  
Alf I ask, the heaven above  
And the road below me.

## II

## YOUTH AND LOVE—(I)

ONCE only by the garden gate  
Our lips we joined and parted.  
I must fulfil an empty fate,  
And travel the uncharted.  
Hail and farewell ! I must arise,  
Leave here the fatted cattle,  
And paint on foreign lands and skies  
My Odyssey of battle.  
The untented Kosmos my abode,  
I pass, a wilful stranger :  
My mistress still the open road  
And the bright eyes of danger.  
Come ill or well, the cross, the crown,  
The rainbow or the thunder,  
I fling my soul and body down  
For God to plough them under.

## III

## YOUTH AND LOVE—(II)

To the heart of youth the world is a highwyside.  
Passing for ever, he fares ; and on either hand,  
Deep in the gardens golden pavilions hide,  
Nestle in orchard bloom, and far on the level land  
Call him with lighted lamp in the eventide.

Thick as the stars at night when the moon is down,  
Pleasures assail him. He to his nobler fate  
Fares ; and but waves a hand as he passes on,  
Cries but a wayside word to her at the garden gate,  
Sings but a boyish stave and his face is gone.

## IV

In dreams, unhappy, I behold you stand  
As heretofore :  
The unremembered tokens in your hand  
Avail no more.

No more the morning glow, no more the grace,  
Enshrines, endears.  
Cold beats the light of time upon your face  
And shows your tears.

He came and went. Perchance you wept awhile  
And then forgot.  
Ah me ! but he that left you with a smile  
Forgets you not.

## V

SHE rested by the Broken Brook,  
She drank of Weary Well,  
She moved beyond my lingering look,  
Ah, whither none can tell !

She came, she went. In other lands,  
Perchance in fairer skies,  
Her hands shall cling with other hands,  
Her eyes to other eyes.

She vanished. In the sounding town,  
Will she remember too ?  
Will she recall the eyes of brown  
As I recall the blue ?

## VI

THE infinite shining heavens  
Rose and I saw in the night  
Uncountable angel stars  
Showering sorrow and light.

I saw them distant as heaven,  
Dumb and shining and dead,  
And the idle stars of the night  
Were dearer to me than bread.

Night after night in my sorrow  
The stars stood over the sea,  
Till lo ! I looked in the dusk  
And a star had come down to me.

## VII

PLAIN as the glistering planets shine  
When winds have cleaned the skies,  
Her love appeared, appealed for mine,  
And wantoned in her eyes.

## TO YOU, LET SNOW AND ROSES , 167

Clear as the shining tapers burned  
On Cytherea's shrine,  
Those brimming, lustrous beauties turned,  
And called and conquered mine.

The beacon-lamp that Hero lit  
No fairer shone on sea,  
No plainlier summoned will and wit,  
Than hers encouraged me.

I thrilled to feel her influence near,  
I struck my flag at sight.  
Her starry silence smote my ear  
Like sudden drums at night.

I ran as, at the cannon's roar,  
The troops the ramparts man—  
As in the holy house of yore  
The willing Eli ran.

Here, lady, lo! that servant stands  
You picked from passing men,  
And should you need nor heart nor hands  
He bows and goes again.

### VIII

To you, let snow and roses  
And golden locks belong.  
These are the world's enslavers,  
Let these delight the throng.  
For her of duskier lustre  
Whose favour still I wear,  
The snow be in her kirtle,  
The rose be in her hair!

The hue of highland rivers  
 Careering, full and cool,  
 From sable on to golden,  
 From rapid on to pool—  
 The hue of heather-honey,  
 The hue of honey-bees,  
 Shall tinge her golden shoulder,  
 Shall gild her tawny knees.

## IX

LET Beauty awake in the morn from beautiful dreams,  
 Beauty awake from rest !  
 Let Beauty awake  
 For Beauty's sake  
 In the hour when the birds awake in the brake  
 And the stars are bright in the west !

Let Beauty awake in the eve from the slumber of day,  
 Awake in the crimson eve !  
 In the day's dusk end  
 When the shades ascend,  
 Let her wake to the kiss of a tender friend  
 To render again and receive !

## X

I KNOW not how it is with you—  
 I love the first and last,  
 The whole field of the present view,  
 The whole flow of the past.

## I WILL MAKE YOU BROOCHES , 169

One tittle of the things that are,  
Nor you should change nor I—  
One pebble in our path—one star  
In all our heaven of sky.

Our lives, and every day and hour,  
One symphony appear :  
'One road, one garden—every flower  
And every bramble dear.

### XI

I WILL make you brooches and toys for your delight  
Of bird-song at morning and star-shine at night.  
I will make a palace fit for you and me  
Of green days in forests and blue days at sea.

I will make my kitchen, and you shall keep your  
room,  
Where white flows the river and bright blows the  
broom,  
And you shall wash your linen and keep your body  
white  
In rainfall at morning and dewfall at night.

And this shall be for music when no one else is  
near,  
The fine song for singing, the rare song to hear !  
That only I remember, that only you admire,  
Of the broad road that stretches and the roadside fire.



## XII

## WE HAVE LOVED OF YORE

*(To an air of Diabelli)*

BERRIED brake and reedy island,  
Heaven below, and only heaven above,  
Through the sky's inverted azure  
Softly swam the boat that bore our love.  
Bright were your eyes as the day ;  
Bright 'ran the stream,  
Bright hung the sky above.  
Days of April, airs of Eden,  
How the glory died through golden hours,  
And the shining moon arising,  
How the boat drew homeward filled with flowers !  
Bright were' your eyes in the night :  
We have lived, my love—  
O, we have loved, my love.

Frost has bound our flowing river,  
Snow has whitened all our island brake,  
And beside the winter fagot  
Joan and Darby doze and dream and wake.  
Still, in the river of dreams  
Swims the boat of love—  
Hark ! chimes the falling oar !  
And again in winter evens  
When on firelight dreaming fancy feeds,  
In those ears of agèd lovers  
Love's own river warbles in the reeds.  
Love still the past, O my love !  
We have lived of yore,  
O, we have loved of yore.

## XIII

## MATER TRIUMPHANS

SON of my woman's body, you go, to the drum and  
fife,

To taste the colour of love and the other side of  
life—

From out of the dainty the rude, the strong from out  
of the frail,

Eternally through the ages from the female comes the  
male.

The ten fingers and toes, and the shell-like nail on  
each,

The eyes blind as gems and the tongue attempting  
speech ;

Impotent hands in my bosom, and yet they shall wield  
the sword !

Drugged with slumber and milk, you wait the day of  
the Lord.

Infant bridegroom, uncrowned king, unanointed priest,  
Soldier, lover, explorer, I see you nuzzle the breast.

You that grope in my bosom shall load the ladies with  
rings,

You, that came forth through the doors, shall burst  
the doors of kings.

## XIV

BRIGHT is the ring of words

When the right man rings them,

Fair the fall of songs

When the singer sings them.

Still they are carolled and said—  
On wings they are carried—  
After the singer is dead  
And the maker buried.

Low as the singer lies  
In the field of heather,  
Songs of his fashion bring  
The swains together.  
And when the west is red  
With the sunset embers,  
The lover lingers and sings  
And the maid remembers.

## XV

In the highlands, in the country places,  
Where the old plain men have rosy faces,  
And the young fair maidens  
Quiet eyes;  
Where essential silence cheers and blesses,  
And for ever in the hill-recesses  
*Her* more lovely music  
Broods and dies.

O to mount again where erst I haunted;  
Where the old red hills are bird-encharmed,  
And the low green meadows  
Bright with sward;  
And when even dies, the million-tinted,  
And the night has come, and planets glinted,  
Lo, the valley hollow  
Lamp-bestarred!

O to dream, O to awake and wander  
 There, and with delight to take and render,  
 Through the trance of silence,  
 Quiet breath ;  
 Lo ! for there, among the flowers and grasses,  
 Only the mightier movement sounds and passes ;  
 Only winds and rivers,  
 Life and death.

## XVI

*(To the tune of Wandering Willie)*

HOME no more home to me, whither must I wander ?  
 Hunger my driver, I go where I must.  
 Cold blows the winter wind over hill and heather ;  
 Thick drives the rain, and my roof is in the dust.  
 Loved of wise men was the shade of my roof-tree.  
 The true word of welcome was spoken in the door--  
 Dear days of old, with the faces in the firelight,  
 Kind folks of old, you come again no more.

Home was home then, my dear, full of kindly faces,  
 Home was home then, my dear, happy for the child.  
 Fire and the windows bright glittered on the moor-  
 land ;  
 Song, tuneful song, built a palace in the wild.  
 Now, when day dawns on the brow of the moorland,  
 Lone stands the house, and the chimney-stone is  
 cold.  
 Lone let it stand, now the friends are all departed,  
 The kind hearts,\* the true hearts, that loved the  
 place of old.

Spring shall come, come again, calling up the moor-  
fowl,  
Spring shall bring the sun and rain, bring the bees  
and flowers ;  
Red shall the heather bloom over hill and valley,  
Soft flow the stream through the even-flowing  
hours ;  
Fair the day shine as it shone on my childhood—  
Fair shine the day on the house with open door ;  
Birds come and cry there and twitter in the chimney—  
But I go for ever and come again no more.

## XVII

## WINTER

IN rigorous hours, when down the iron lane  
The redbreast looks in vain  
For hips and haws,  
Lo, shining flowers upon my window-pane—  
The silver pencil of the winter draws.

When all the snowy hill  
And the bare woods are still ;  
When snipes are silent in the frozen bogs,  
And all the garden garth is whelmed in mire,  
Lo, by the hearth, the laughter of the logs—  
More fair than roses, lo, the flowers of fire !

## XVIII

THE stormy evening closes now in vain,  
Loud wails the wind and beats the driving rain,  
While here in sheltered house  
With fire-ypainted walls,  
I hear the wind abroad,  
I hark the calling squalls—  
“Blow, blow,” I cry, “you burst your cheeks in vain !  
Blow, blow,” I cry, “my love is home again !”

Yon ship you chase perchance but yesternight  
Bore still the precious freight of my delight,  
That here in sheltered house  
With fire-ypainted walls,  
Now hears the wind abroad,  
Now harks the calling squalls.  
“Blow, blow,” I cry, “in vain you rouse the sea,  
My rescued sailor shares the fire with me !”

## XIX

TO DR. HAKE

(On receiving a Copy of Verses)

IN the belovèd hour that ushers day,  
In the pure dew, under the breaking grey,  
One bird, ere yet the woodland quires awake,  
With brief réveillè summons all the brake :  
*Chirp, chirp*, it goes ; nor waits an answer long ;  
And that small signal fills the grove with song.

Thus on my pipe I breathed a strain or two ;  
It scarce was music, but 'twas all I knew.  
It was not music, for I lacked the art,  
Yet what but frozen music filled my heart ?  
*Chirp, chirp*, I went, nor hoped a nobler strain ;  
But Heaven decreed I should not pipe in vain,  
For, lo ! not far from there, in secret dale,  
All silent, sat an ancient nightingale.  
My sparrow notes he heard ; thereat awoke ;  
And with a tide of song his silence broke.

## XX

## TO —

I KNEW thee strong and quiet like the hills ;  
I knew thee apt to pity, brave to endure,  
In peace or war a Roman full equipt ;  
And just I knew thee, like the fabled kings  
Who by the loud sea-shore gave judgment forth,  
From dawn to eve, bearded and few of words.  
What, what, was I to honour thee ? A child ;  
A youth in ardour but a child in strength,  
Who after virtue's golden chariot-wheels  
Runs ever panting, nor attains the goal.  
So thought I, and was sorrowful at heart.

Since then my steps have visited that flood  
Along whose shore the numerous footfalls cease,  
The voices and the tears of life expire.  
Thither the prints go down, the hero's way  
Trode large upon the sand, the trembling maid's :  
Nimrod that wound his trumpet in the wood

And the poor, dreaming child, hunter of flowers,  
That here his hunting closes with the great :  
So one and all go down, nor aught returns.

For thee, for us, the sacred river waits,  
For me, the unworthy, thee, the perfect friend ;  
There Blame desists, there his unfaltering dogs  
He from the chase recalls, and homeward rides ;  
Yet Praise and Love pass over and go in.  
So when, beside that margin, I discard  
My more than mortal weakness, and with thee  
Through that still land unfearing I advance :  
If then at all we keep the touch of joy  
Thou shalt rejoice to find me altered—I,  
O Felix, to behold thee still unchanged.

## XXI

THE morning drum-call on my eager ear  
Thrills unforgotten yet; the morning dew  
Lies yet undried along my field of noon.

But now I pause at whiles in what I do,  
And count the bell, and tremble lest I hear  
(My work untrimmed) the sunset gun too soon.

## XXII

I HAVE trod the upward and the downward slope ;  
I have endured and done in days before ;  
I have longed for ~~all~~, and bid farewell to hope ;  
And I have lived and loved, and closed the door.



## XXIII

He hears with gladdened heart the thunder  
Peal, and loves the falling dew ;  
He knows the earth above and under—  
Sits and is content to view.

He sits beside the dying ember,  
God for hope and man for friend,  
Content to see, glad to remember,  
Expectant of the certain end.

## XXIV

FAREWELL, fair day and fading light !  
The clay-born, here, with westward sight,  
Marks the huge sun now downward soar.  
Farewell. We twain shall meet no more.

Farewell. I watch with bursting sigh  
My late contemned occasion die.  
I linger useless in my tent :  
Fairwell, fair day, so foully spent !

Fairwell, fair day. If any God  
At all consider this poor clod,  
He who the fair occasion sent  
Prepared and placed the impediment.

Let him diviner vengeance take—  
Give me to sleep, give me to wake  
Girded and shod, and bid me play  
The hero in the coming day !

## XXV

## IF THIS WERE FAITH

God, if this were enough,  
That I see things bare to the buff  
And up to the buttocks in mire,  
That I ask nor hope nor hire,  
Nut in the husk,  
Nor dawn beyond the dusk,  
Nor life beyond death :  
God, if this were faith ?

Having felt thy wind in my face  
Spit sorrow and disgrace,  
Having seen thine evil doom  
In Golgotha and Khartoum;  
And the brutes, the work of thine hands,  
Fill with injustice lands  
And stain with blood the sea ·  
If still in my veins the glee  
Of the black night and the sun  
And the lost battle, run :  
If, an adept,  
The iniquitous lists I still accept  
With joy, and joy to endure and be withstood,  
And still to battle and perish for a dream of good :  
God, if that were enough ?

If to feel, in the ink of the slough,  
And the sink of the mire,  
Veins of glory and fire  
Run through and transpire and transpire,

And a secret purpose of glory in every part,  
And the answering glory of battle fill my heart ;  
To thrill with the joy of girded men,  
To go on for ever and fail and go on again,  
And be mauled to the earth and arise,  
And contend for the shade of a word and a thing not  
    seen with the eyes :  
With the half of a broken hope for a pillow at night  
That somehow the right is the right ,  
And the smooth shall bloom from the rough :  
Lord, if that were enough ?

## XXVI

## MY WIFE

TRUSTY, dusky, vivid, true,  
With eyes of gold and bramble-dew,  
Steel-true and blade-straight,  
The great artificer     •  
Made my mate.

Honour, anger, valour, fire ;  
A love that life could never tire,  
Death quench or evil stir,  
The mighty master  
Gave to her.

Teacher, tender, comrade, wife,  
A fellow-farer true through life,  
Heart-whole and soul-free  
The august father     •  
Gave to me.

## XXVII

## TO THE MUSE

RESIGN the rhapsody, the dream,  
To men of larger reach ;  
Be ours the quest of a plain theme,  
The piety of speech.

As monkish scribes from morning break  
Toiled till the close of light,  
Nor thought a day too long to make  
One line or letter bright :

We also with an ardent mind,  
Time, wealth, and fame forgot,  
Our glory in our patience find  
And skim, and skim the pot :

Till last, when round the house we hear  
The evensong of birds,  
One corner of blue heaven appear  
In our clear well of words.

Leave, leave it then, muse of my heart !  
Sans finish and sans frame,  
Leave unadorned by needless art  
The picture as it came.

## XXVIII

## TO AN ISLAND PRINCESS

SINCE long ago, a child at home,  
I read and longed to rise and roam,  
Where'er I went, whate'er I willed,  
One promised land my fancy filled.  
Hence the long roads my home I' made,  
Tossed much in ships; have often laid  
Below the uncurtained sky my head,  
Rain-deluged and wind-buffeted:  
And many a thousand hills I crossed  
And corners turned—Love's labour lost,  
Till, Lady, to your isle of sun  
I came, not hoping; and, like one  
Snatched out of blindness, rubbed my eyes,  
And hailed my promised land with cries.

Yes, Lady, here I was at last;  
Here found I all I had forecast:  
The long roll of the sapphire sea  
That keeps the land's virginity;  
The stalwart giants of the wood  
Laden with toys and flowers and food;  
The precious forest pouring out  
To compass the whole town about;  
The town itself with streets of lawn,  
Loved of the moon, blessed by the dawn,  
Where the brown children all the day  
Keep up a ceaseless noise of play,  
Play in the sun, play in the rain,  
Nor ever quarrel or complain;—

And late at night, in the woods of fruit,  
 Hark! do you hear the passing flute?  
 I threw one look to either hand,  
 And knew I was in Fairyland.  
 And yet one point of being so  
 I lacked. For, Lady (as you know),  
 Whoever by his might of hand,  
 Won entrance into Fairyland,  
 Found always with admiring eyes  
 A Fairy princess kind and wise.  
 It was not long I waited; soon  
 Upon my threshold, in broad noon,  
 Gracious and helpful, wise and good,  
 The Fairy Princess Moë stood.<sup>1</sup>

TANTIRA, TAHITI,

November 5, 1888.

## XXIX

## TO KALAKAUA

(*With a Present of a Pearl*)

THE Silver Ship, my King—that was her name  
 In the bright islands whence your fathers came<sup>2</sup>—  
 The Silver Ship, at rest from winds and tides,  
 Below your palace in your harbour rides:  
 And the seafarers, sitting safe on shore,  
 Like eager merchants count their treasures o'er.

<sup>1</sup> This is the same Princess Moë whose charms of person and disposition have been recorded by the late Lord Pembroke in *South Sea Bubbles*, and by M. Pierre Loti in the *Mariage de Lots*.

<sup>2</sup> The yacht *Casco* had been so called by the people of Fakarava in the Paumotus.

One gift they find, one strange and lovely thing,  
Now doubly precious since it pleased a king.

The right, my liege, is ancient as the lyre  
For bards to give to kings what kings admire.  
'Tis mine to offer for Apollo's sake ;  
And since the gift is fitting, yours to take.  
To golden hands the golden pearl I bring  
The ocean jewel to the island king.

HONOLULU,  
*February 3, 1884.*

## XXX

## TO PRINCESS KAIULANI

[Written in April to Kaiulani in the April of her age; and at Waikiki, within easy walk of Kaiulani's banyan! When she comes to my land and her father's, and the rain beats upon the window (as I fear it will), let her look at this page; it will be like a weed gathered and pressed at home; and she will remember her own islands, and the shadow of the mighty tree; and she will hear the peacocks screaming in the dusk and the wind blowing in the palms; and she will think of her father sitting there alone —R.L.S.]

FORTH from her land to mine she goes,  
The island maid, the island rose,  
Light of heart and bright of face :  
The daughter of a double race.

Her islands here, in Southern sun,  
Shall mourn their Kaiulani gone,  
And I, in her dear banyan shade,  
Look vainly for my little maid.

But our Scots islands far away  
Shall glitter with unwonted day,  
And cast for once their tempests by  
To smile in Kaiulani's eye.

## XXXI

## TO MOTHER MARYANNE

To see the infinite pity of this place,  
The mangled limb, the devastated face,  
The innocent sufferer smiling at the rod—  
A fool were tempted to deny his God.  
He sees, he shrinks. But if he gaze again,  
Lo, beauty springing from the breast of pain !  
He marks the sisters on the mournful shores ;  
And even a fool is silent and adores.

GUEST HOUSE, KALAWAO, MOLOKAI.

## XXXII

## IN MEMORIAM E. H.

I KNEW a silver head was bright beyond compare,  
I knew a queen of toil with a crown of silver hair.  
Garland of valour and sorrow, of beauty and renown,  
Life, that honours the brave, crowned her himself  
with the crown.

The beauties of youth are frail, but this was a jewel  
of age.  
Life, that delights in the brave, gave it himself for a  
gage.



Fair was the crown to behold, and beauty its poorest  
part—

At once the scar of the wound and the order pinned  
on the heart.

The beauties of man are frail, and the silver lies in  
the dust,

And the queen that we call to mind sleeps with the  
brave and the just ;

Sleeps with the weary at length ; but, 'honoured and  
ever fair,•

Shines in the eye of the mind the crown of the silver  
hair.

HONOLULU

XXXIII

TO MY WIFE

(*A Fragment*)

LONG must elapse ere you behold again  
Green forest frame the entry of the lane—  
The wild lane with the bramble and the briar,  
The year-old cart-tracks perfect in the mire,  
The wayside smoke, perchance, the dwarfish huts,  
And ramblers' donkey drinking from the ruts :—  
Long ere you trace how deviously it leads,  
Back from man's chimneys and the bleating meads  
To the woodland shadow, to the sylvan hush,  
When but the brooklet chuckles in the brush—  
Back from the sun and bustle of the vale  
To where the great voice of the nightingale

Fills all the forest like a single room,  
And all the banks smell of the golden broom ;  
So wander on until the eve descends,  
And back returning to your firelit friends,  
You see the rosy sun, despoiled of light,  
Hung, caught in thickets, like a schoolboy's kite.

Here f'rom the sea the unfruitful sun shall rise,  
Bathe the bare deck and blind the unshielded eyes ;  
The allotted hours aloft shall wheel in vain  
And in the unpregnant ocean plunge again.  
Assault of squalls that mock the watchful guard,  
And pluck the bursting canvas from the yard,  
And senseless clamour of the calm, at night  
Must mar your slumbers. By the plunging light,  
In beetle-haunted, most unwomanly bower  
Of the wild-swerving cabin, hour by hour . . .

SCHOONER *Equator*.

XXXIV

TO MY OLD FAMILIARS

Do you remember—can we e'er forget ?—  
How, in the coiled perplexities of youth,  
In our wild climate, in our scowling town,  
We gloomed and shivered, sorrowed, sobbed and  
feared ?  
The belching winter wind, the missile rain,  
The rare and welcome silence of the snows,  
The laggard morn, the haggard day, the night,  
The grimy spell of the nocturnal town,  
Do you remember ?—Ah, could one forget !

As when the fevered sick that all night long  
Listed the wind intone, and hear at last  
The ever-welcome voice of chanticleer  
Sing in the bitter hour before the dawn,—  
With sudden ardour, these desire the day :  
So sang in the gloom of youth the bird of hope ;  
So we, exulting, hearkened and desired.  
For lo ! as in the palace porch of life  
We huddled with chimeras, from within—  
How sweet to hear !—the music swelled and fell,  
And through the breach of the revolving doors  
What dreams of splendour blinded us and fled !

I have since then contended and rejoiced ;  
Amid the glories of the house of life  
Profoundly entered, and the shrine beheld :  
Yet when the lamp from my expiring eyes  
Shall dwindle and recede, the voice of love  
Fall insignificant on my closing ears,  
What sound shall come but the old cry of the wind  
In our inclement city ? what return  
But the image of the emptiness of youth,  
Filled with the sound of footsteps and that voice  
Of discontent and rapture and despair ?  
So, as in darkness, from the magic lamp,  
The momentary pictures gleam and fade  
And perish, and the night resurges—these  
Shall I remember, and then all forget.

APENAMA.

## XXXV

THE tropics vanish, and meseems that I,  
From Halkerside, from topmost Allermuir,  
Or steep Caerketton, dreaming gaze again.  
Far set in fields and woods, the town I see  
Spring gallant from the shallows of her smoke,  
Cragged, spired, and turreted, her virgin fort  
Beflagged. About, on seaward-drooping hills,  
New folds of city glitter. Last, the Forth  
Wheels ample waters set with sacred isles,  
And populous Fife smokes with a score of towns.

There, on the sunny frontage of a hill,  
Hard by the house of kings, repose the dead,  
My dead, the ready and the strong of word.  
Their works, the salt-encrusted, still survive ;  
The sea bombards their founded towers ; the night  
Thrills pierced with their strong lamps. The  
artificers,

One after one, here in this grated cell,  
Where the rain erases, and the rust consumes,  
Fell upon lasting silence. Continents  
And continental oceans intervene ;  
A sea uncharted, on a lampless isle,  
Environs and confines their wandering child  
In vain. The voice of generations dead  
Summons me, sitting distant, to arise,  
My numerous footsteps nimbly to retrace,  
And, all mutation over, stretch me down  
In that denoted city of the dead.

APEMAMA.

## XXXVI

TO S. C.

I HEARD the pulse of the besieging sea  
Throb far away all night. I heard the wind  
Fly crying and convulse tumultuous palms.  
I rose and strolled. The isle was all bright sand,  
And flailing fans and shadows of the palm ;  
The heaven all moon and wind and the blind vault ;  
The keenest planet slain, for Venus slept.

The king, my neighbour, with his host of wives,  
Slept in the precinct of the palisade ;  
Where single, in the wind, under the moon,  
Among the slumbering cabins, blazed a fire,  
Sole street-lamp and the only sentinel.

To other lands and nights my fancy turned—  
To London first, and chiefly to your house,  
The many-pillared and the well-beloved.  
There yearning fancy lightéd ; there again  
In the upper room I lay, and heard far off  
The unsleeping city murmur like a shell ;  
The muffled tramp of the Museum guard  
Once more went by me ; I beheld again  
Lamps vainly brighten the dispeopled street ;  
Again I longed for the returning morn,  
The awaking traffic, the bestirring birds,  
The consentaneous trill of tiny song  
That weaves round monumental cornices  
A passing charm of beauty. Most of all,  
For your light foot I wearied, and your knock  
That was the glad réveillé of my day.

Lo, now, when to your task in the great house  
 At morning through the portico you pass,  
 One moment glance, where by the pillared wall  
 Far-voyaging island gods, begrimed with smoke,  
 Sit now unworshipped, the rude monument  
 Of faiths forgot and races undivined :  
 Sit now disconsolate, remembering well  
 The priest, the victim, and the songful crowd,  
 The blaze of the blue noon, and that huge voice,  
 Incessant, of the breakers on the shore.  
 As far as these from their ancestral shrine,  
 So far, so foreign, your divided friends  
 Wander, estranged in body, not in mind.

APEMAMA.

XXXVII

THE HOUSE OF TEMBINOKA

[At my departure from the island of Apemama, for which you will look in vain in most atlases, the King and I agreed, since we both set up to be in the poetical way, that we should celebrate our separation in verse. Whether or not his Majesty has been true to his bargain, the laggard posts of the Pacific may perhaps inform me in six months, perhaps not before a year. The following lines represent my part of the contract, and it is hoped, by their pictures of strange manners, they may entertain a civilised audience. Nothing throughout has been invented or exaggerated; the lady herein referred to as the author's muse has confined herself to stringing into rhyme facts or legends that I saw or heard during two months' residence upon the island.—  
 R. L. S.]

## ENVOI

*Let us, who part like brothers, part like bards ;  
 And you in your tongue and measure, I in mine,  
 Our now division duly solemnise.  
 Unlike the strains, and yet the theme is one :  
 The strains unlike, and how unlike their fate !  
 You to the blinding palace-yard shall call  
 The prefect of the singers, and to him,  
 Listening devout, your valedictory verse  
 Deliver ; he, his attribute fulfilled,  
 To the island chorus hand your measures on,  
 Wed now with harmony : so them, at last,  
 Night after night, in the open hall of dance,  
 Shall thirty matted men, to the clapped hand,  
 Intone and bray and bark. Unfortunate !  
 Paper and print alone shall honour mine.*

## THE SONG

LET now the King his ear arouse  
 And toss the bosky ringlets from his brows,  
 The while, our bond to implement,  
 My muse relates and praises his descent.

## I

Bride of the shark, her valour first I sing  
 Who on the lone seas quickened of a King.  
 She, from the shore and puny homes of men,  
 Beyond the climber's sea-discerning ken,  
 Swam, led by omens ; and devoid of fear,

Beheld her monstrous paramour draw near.  
 She gazed ; all round her to the heavenly pale,  
 The simple sea was void of isle or sail—  
 Sole overhead the unsparing sun was reared—  
 When the deep bubbled and the brute appeared  
 But she, secure in the decrees of fate,  
 Made strong her bosom and received the mate,  
 And, men declare, from that marine embrace  
 Conceived the virtues of a stronger race.

## II

Her stern descendant next I praise,  
 Survivor of a thousand frays :—  
 In the hall of tongues who ruled the throng ;  
 Led and was trusted by the strong ;  
 And when spears were in the wood,  
 Like a tower of vantage stood :—  
 Whom, not till seventy years had sped,  
 Unscarred of breast, erect of head,  
 Still light of step, still bright of look,  
 The hunter, Death, had overtook.

## III

His sons, the brothers twain, I sing,  
 Of whom the elder reigned a King.  
 No Childeric he, yet much declined  
 From his rude sire's imperious mind,  
 Until his day came when he died,  
 He lived, he reigned, he versified.  
 But chiefly him I celebrate  
 That was the pillar of the state,  
 Ruled, wise of word and bold of mien,



The peaceful and the warlike scene ;  
And played alike the leader's part  
In lawful and unlawful art.  
His soldiers with emboldened ears  
Heard him laugh among the spears.  
He could deduce from age to age  
The web of island parentage ;  
Best lay the rhyme, best lead the dance,  
For any festal circumstance :  
And fitly fashion oar and boat,  
A palace or an armour coat.  
None more availed than he to raise  
The strong, suffumigating blaze,  
Or knot the wizard leaf : none more,  
Upon the untrodden windward shore  
Of the isle, beside the beating main,  
To cure the sickly and constrain,  
With muttered words and waving rods,  
The gibbering and the whistling gods.  
But he, though thus with hand and head  
He ruled, commanded, charmed, and led,  
And thus in virtue and in might  
Towered to contemporary sight—  
Still in fraternal faith and love,  
Remained below to reach above,  
Gave and obeyed the apt command,  
Pilot and vassal of the land.

## IV

My Tembinok' from men like these  
Inherited his palaces,  
His right to rule, his powers of mind,

His cocoa-islands sea-enshrined.  
Stern bearer of the sword and whip,  
A master passed in mastership,  
He learned, without the spur of need,  
To write, to cipher, and to read ;  
From all that touch on his prone shore  
Augments his treasury of lore,  
Eager in age as erst in youth  
To catch an art, to learn a truth,  
To paint on the internal page  
A clearer picture of the age.  
His age, you say ? But ah, not so !  
In his lone isle of long ago,  
A royal Lady of Shalott,  
Sea-sundered, he beholds it not ;  
He only hears it far away.  
The stress of equatorial day  
He suffers ; he records the while  
The vapid annals of the isle ;  
Slaves bring him praise of his renown,  
Or cackle of the palm-tree town ;  
The rarer ship and the rare boat  
He marks ; and only hears remote,  
Where thrones and fortunes rise and reel,  
The thunder of the turning wheel.

v

For the unexpected tears he shed  
At my departing, may his lion head  
Not whiten, his revolving years  
No fresh occasion minister of tears ;

At book or cards, at work or sport,  
Him may the breeze across the palace court  
For ever fan ; and swelling near  
For ever the loud song divert his ear.

**SCHOONER *Equator*, AT SEA.**

XXXVIII

THE WOODMAN

IN all the grove, nor stream nor bird  
Nor aught beside my blows was heard,  
And the woods wore their noonday dress—  
The glory of their silentness.  
From the island summit to the seas,  
Trees mounted, and trees drooped, and trees  
Groped upward in the gaps. The green  
Inarbour'd talus and ravine  
By fathoms. By the multitude  
The rugged columns of the wood  
And bunches of the branches stood ;  
Thick as a mob, deep as a sea,  
And silent as eternity.  
With lowered axe, with backward head,  
Late from this scene my labourer fled,  
And with a ravelled tale to tell,  
Returned. Some denizen of hell,  
Dead man or disinvested god,  
Had close behind him peered and trod,  
And triumphed when he turned to flee.  
How different fell the lines with me !  
Whose eye explored the dim arcade

Impatient of the uncoming shade—  
Shy elf, or dryad pale and cold,  
Or mystic lingerer from of old :  
Vainly. The fair and stately things,  
Impassive as departed kings,  
All still in the wood's stillness stood,  
And dumb. The rooted multitude  
Nodded and brooded, bloomed and dreamed  
Unmeaping, undivined. It seemed  
No other art, no hope, they knew,  
Than clutch the earth and seek the blue.  
'Mid vegetable king and priest  
And stripling, I (the only beast)  
Was at the beast's work, killing; hewed  
The stubborn roots across, bestrewed  
The glebe with the dislusted leaves,  
And bade the saplings fall in sheaves;  
Bursting across the tangled math  
A ruin that I called a path,  
A Golgotha that, later on,  
When rains had watered, and suns shone,  
And seeds enriched the place, should bear  
And be called garden. Here and there,  
I spied and plucked by the green hair  
A foe more resolute to live,  
The toothed and killing sensitive.  
He, semi-conscious, fled the attack;  
He shrank and tucked his branches back;  
And straining by his anchor-strand,  
Captured and scratched the rooting hand.  
I saw him crouch, I felt him bite;  
And straight my eyes were touched with sight.  
I saw the wood for what it was.

The lost and the victorious cause,  
The deadly battle pitched in line,  
Saw silent weapons cross and shine :  
Silent defeat, silent assault,  
A battle and a burial vault,

Thick round me in the teeming mud  
Brier and fern strove to the blood :  
The hooked liana in his gin  
Noosed his reluctant neighbours in :  
There the green murderer throve and spread,  
Upon his smothering victims fed,  
And wantoned on his climbing coil.  
Contending roots fought for the soil  
Like frightened demons : with despair  
Competing branches pushed for air.  
Green conquerors from overhead  
Bestrode the bodies of their dead :  
The Cæsars of the sylvan field,  
Unused to fail, foredoomed to yield :  
For in the groins of branches, lo !  
The cancers of the orchid grow.  
Silent as in the listed ring  
Two chartered wrestlers strain and cling ;  
Dumb as by yellow Hooghly's side  
The suffocating captives died ;  
So hushed the woodland warfare goes  
Unceasing ; and the silent foes  
Grapple and smother, strain and clasp  
Without a cry, without a gasp.  
Here also sound thy fans, O God,  
Here too thy banners move abroad :  
Forest and city, sea and shore,

And the whole earth, thy threshing-floor !  
The drums of war, the drums of peace,  
Roll through our cities without cease,  
And all the iron halls of life  
Ring with the unremitting strife.

The common lot we scarce perceive.  
Crowds perish, we nor mark nor grieve :  
The bugle calls—we mourn a few !  
What corporal's guard at Waterloo ?  
What scanty hundreds more or less  
In the man-devouring Wilderness ?  
What handful bled on Delhi ridge ?  
—See, rather, London, on thy bridge  
The pale battalions trample by,  
Resolved to slay, resigned to die.  
Count rather, all the maimed and dead  
In the unbrotherly war of bread.  
See, rather, under sultrier skies  
What vegetable Londons rise,  
And teem, and suffer without sound :  
Or in your tranquil garden ground,  
Contented, in the falling gloom,  
Saunter and see the roses bloom.  
That these might live, what thousands died !  
All day the cruel hoe was plied ;  
The ambulance barrow rolled all day ;  
Your wife, the tender, kind, and gay,  
Donned her long gauntlets, caught the spud,  
And bathed in vegetable blood ;  
And the long massacre now at end,  
See ! where the lazy coils ascend,

See, where the bonfire sputters red  
At even, for the innocent dead.

Why prate of peace ? when, warriors all,  
We clank in harness into hall,  
And ever bare upon the board  
Lies the necessary sword.  
In the green field or quiet street,  
Besieged we sleep, beleaguered eat ;  
Labour by day and wake o' nights,  
In war with rival appetites.  
The rose on roses feeds ; the lark  
On larks. The sedentary clerk  
All morning with a diligent pen  
Murders the babes of other men ;  
And like the beasts of wood and park,  
Protects his whelps, defends his den.

Unshamed the narrow aim I hold ;  
I feed my sheep, patrol my fold ;  
Breathe war on wolves and rival flocks,  
A pious outlaw on the rocks  
Of God and morning ; and when time  
Shall bow, or rivals break me, climb  
Where no undubbed civilian dares,  
In my war harness, the loud stairs  
Of honour ; and my conqueror  
Hail me a warrior fallen in war.

VAILIMA.

## XXXIX

## TROPIC RAIN

As the single pang of the blow, when the metal is  
mingled well,  
Rings and lives and resounds in all the bounds of the  
bell,  
So the thunder above spoke with a single tongue,  
So in the heart of the mountain the sound of it rum-  
bled and clung.

Sudden the thunder was drowned—quenched was the  
levin light—  
And the angel-spirit of rain laughed out loud in the  
night.  
Loud as the maddened river raves in the cloven glen,  
Angel of rain! you laughed and leaped on the roofs of  
men;

And the sleepers sprang in their beds, and joyed and  
feared as you fell.  
You struck, and my cabin quailed; the roof of it  
roared like a bell.  
You spoke, and at once the mountain shouted and  
shook with brooks.  
You ceased, and the day returned, rosy, with virgin  
looks.

And methought that beauty and terror are only one,  
not two;  
And the world has room for love, and death, and  
thunder, and dew;



And all the sinews of hell slumber in summer air ;  
And the face of God is a rock, but the face of the rock  
is fair.

Beneficent streams of tears flow at the finger of pain ;  
And out of the cloud that smites, beneficent rivers of  
rain.

VAILIMA.

XL

AN END OF TRAVEL

LET now your soul in this substantial world  
Some anchor strike. Be here the body moored ;—  
This spectacle immutably from now  
The picture in your eye ; and when time strikes,  
And the green scene goes on the instant blind—  
The ultimate helpers, where your horse to-day  
Conveyed you dreaming, bear your body dead.

VAILIMA.

XLI

WE uncommiserate pass into the night  
From the loud banquet, and departing leave  
A tremor in men's memories, faint and sweet  
And frail as music. Features of our face,  
The tones of the voice, the touch of the loved hand,  
Perish and vanish, one by one, from earth :  
Meanwhile, in the hall of song, the multitude  
Applauds the new performer. One, perchance,  
One ultimate survivor lingers on,

And smiles, and to his ancient heart recalls  
The long forgotten. Ere the morrow die,  
He too, returning, through the curtain comes,  
And the new age forgets us and goes on.

## XLII

SING me a song of a lad that is gone,  
Say, could that lad be I ?  
Merry of soul he sailed on a day  
Over the sea to Skye.

Mull was astern, Rum on the port,  
Eigg on the starboard bow :  
Glory of youth glowed in his soul :  
Where is that glory now ?

Sing me a song of a lad that is gone,  
Say, could that lad be I ?  
Merry of soul he sailed on a day  
Over the sea to Skye.

Give me again all that was there,  
Give me the sun that shone !  
Give me the eyes, give me the soul,  
Give me the lad that's gone !

Sing me a song of a lad that is gone,  
Say, could that lad be I ?  
Merry of soul he sailed on a day  
Over the sea to Skye.

Billow and breeze, islands and seas,  
 Mountains of rain and sun,  
 All that was good, all that was fair,  
 All that was me is gone.

## XLIII

TO S. R. CROCKETT

*(On receiving a Dedication)*

BLOWS the wind to-day, and the sun and the rain are  
 flying,  
 Blows the wind on the moors to-day and now,  
 Where about the graves of the martyrs the whaups  
 are crying,  
 My heart remembers how I

Grey recumbent tombs of the dead in desert places,  
 Standing stones on the vacant wine-red moor,  
 Hills of sheep, and the howes of the silent vanished  
 races,  
 And winds, austere and pure :

Be it granted me to behold you again in dying,  
 Hills of home ! and to hear again the call ;  
 Hear about the graves of the martyrs the peewees  
 crying,  
 And hear no more at all.

VAILIMA.

## XLIV

## EVENSONG

THE embers of the day are red  
Beyond the murky hill.  
The kitchen smokes : the bed  
In the darkling house is spread :  
The great sky darkens overhead,  
And the great woods are shrill.  
So far have I been led,  
Lord, by Thy will :  
So far I have followed, Lord, and wondered still.

The breeze from the enbalmèd land  
Blows sudden toward the shore,  
And claps my cottage door.  
I hear the signal, Lord—I understand.  
The night at Thy command  
Comes. I will eat and sleep and will not question  
more.

VALLIMA

THE END



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